



NEWS *Lines*

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

JUNE 2021

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Shine the Light ON COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Do you know someone in our community who deserves to be recognized for making a difference?

Nominate them for our Shine the Light contest by June 30 and they could win \$1,500 for their local charity or nonprofit.

We're really excited to participate in this statewide effort to celebrate our cooperative commitment to community. There are many volunteers throughout our service area who deserve to be recognized.

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this new contest celebrates the people who make our communities better. Three winners will be announced during the Iowa State Fair in August and each will receive a \$1,500 donation for their charity or nonprofit. The winners will also be featured in the September issue of Living with Energy in Iowa magazine.

How to Nominate

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from North West REC, you're a co-op member-consumer and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.



Nominate a local volunteer and they could win \$1,500 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at IowaShineTheLight.com

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com by June 30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. Nominators will need to provide contact information and answer this question in 500 words or less: How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community and why do they deserve to be recognized? A panel of judges will review all contest entries and we'll announce the three winners during the Iowa State Fair in August. Help us shine the light on community volunteers; make a nomination by June 30!

STAY SAFE, FOLLOW *Grain Bin* GUIDELINES

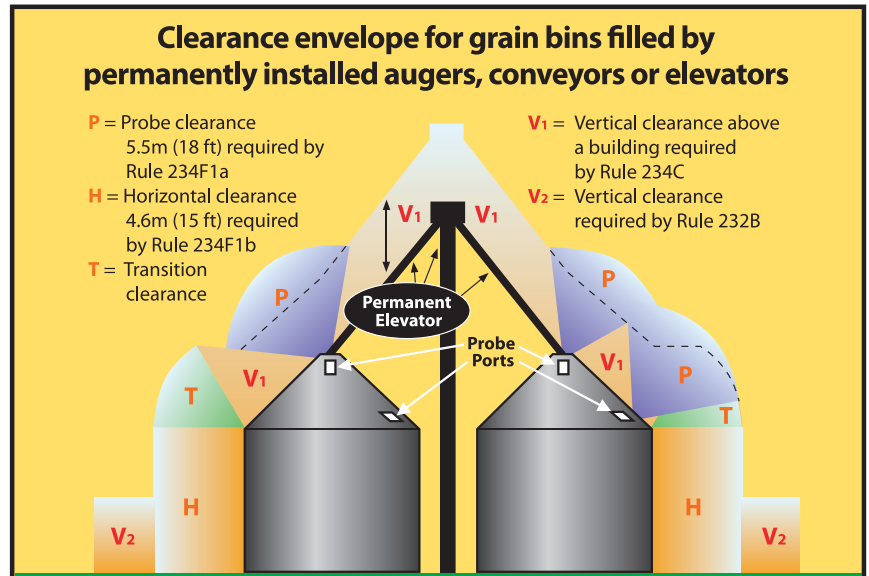
Safety is an important part of living and working on a farm. One important aspect for creating a safe environment on your farm is proper clearances for electric lines around grain bins.

When starting to plan for a new grain bin or moving an existing bin, please contact North West REC at 712-707-4935 or 800-766-2099 and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative at 712-546-4141 to ensure you are meeting the National Electric Safety Code requirements. We will provide assistance in planning for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins.

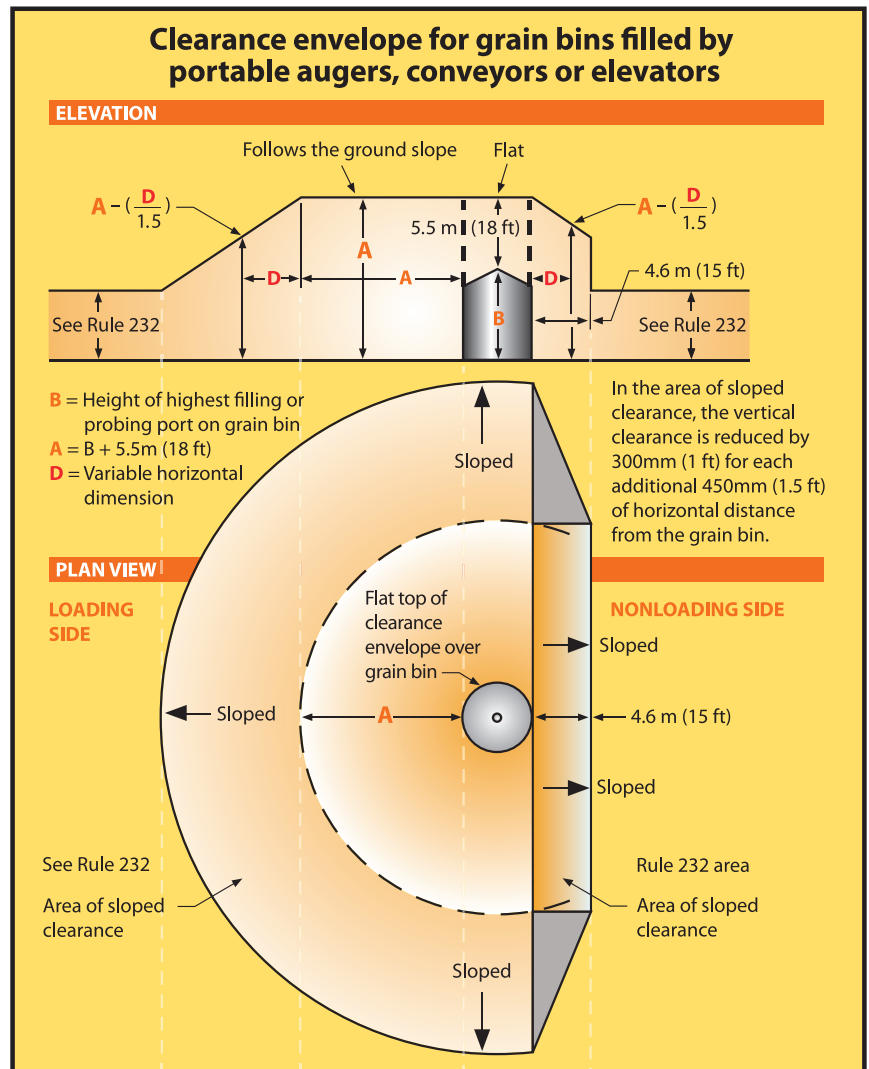
According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 -- 25.2(3) b. An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board)

If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations – or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one – please call our office at 712-707-4935 or 800-766-2099 for the safety of everyone involved.

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents for these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



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Water Heater Warranty

Many of our members have purchased Marathon water heaters from us. Here are a few warranty facts when purchasing the water heater for your home (residential):

- The tank has a lifetime warranty if owned by the original purchaser.
- The parts (elements, thermostats, valves) are under warranty for six years.

If you are not the original purchaser of the water heater and are uncertain of your warranty, please contact our office as there are different warranties depending on the year it was purchased.

If the tank does leak under warranty and you need a replacement, we will need the original silver sticker off the water heater to send to the company to receive the replacement unit.

- Marathon water heaters are sold only to our members and have to be installed on our lines.
- You must have a load management switch installed to receive the rebate.

The rebate is taken off the cost of the water heater – member cost:

50 gallon	\$550
85 gallon	\$400
100 gallon	\$550
105 gallon	\$550
Hog Bldg (50 gallon only)	Full Price – contact office for that price
New Home with all electric heat	FREE 85 gallon (electric primary heat & electric backup heat)



5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



IOWA 811 ONE CALL

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.





Lyle D. Korver

MANAGER'S *Report*

"We appreciate the loyalty and support we receive from our members... We will continue to work hard at improving our overall level of service for our member-owners."

Member Engagement Survey Results

In connection with our continuing efforts to enhance our engagement with our members, we conducted a Member Engagement Survey at the end of 2020. We have completed tabulation of returned surveys and we wanted to share a summary of the results. The participation level of our members was good as we received over **1,100 completed surveys**.

What did we learn?

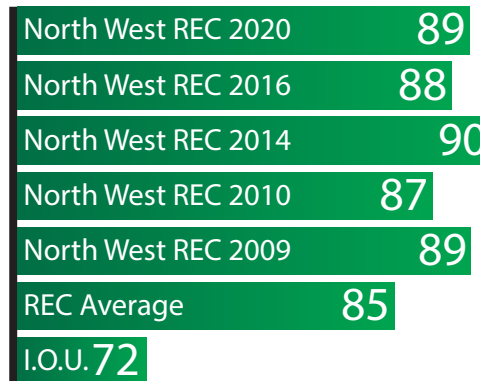
- 87% of our members read the monthly newsletter and feel it is informative.
- 54% prefer to review the Annual Report electronically – on our website or by e-mail. 46% prefer receiving it through the mail.
- 75% read the Living with Energy magazine that is published by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.
- 81% of our members indicated they are familiar with our energy efficient rebates. 64% said it impacted their buying decision.
- 36% said they are currently using SmartHub and a majority of them are interested in receiving a text message about outage restoration.
- Regarding NWREC's involvement with renewables, 81% indicated it was enough. 18% said not enough and 1% said we were too involved with renewables.
- 54% said they might be interested in automatic standby generator financing if it was offered.
- 10% said they have considered purchasing an electric vehicle (EV).

This is a brief summary of the responses and input we received. We also received some great comments on the various topics. We will be using these responses and comments in our ongoing planning of how we

can continue to make improvements in the services we provide our members.

We also asked the four questions that are used by many industries, including electric utilities, to gauge the level of satisfaction of our members. This is called the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI is an index that ranks businesses according to customer expectations, perceived quality, perceived value and customer loyalty.

I'm pleased to report that we received a very good **overall score of 89**. This is on a scale of 0 to 100. This is up slightly from the ACSI score we received in 2016, which was the last time we conducted a survey of our members and this is an exceptional score when compared to other organizations and utilities. This was the fifth time North West REC has conducted a survey to obtain our ACSI score. The graph below shows the NWREC scores – 89 this year; 88 in 2016; 90 in 2014; 87 in 2010 and 89 in 2009 – and the REC and other electric utilities averages. For example, the average ACSI score for the Touchstone Energy REC's



around the U.S. is 85 and for investor owned utilities is 72.

We appreciate the loyalty and support we receive from our members and we are very

pleased with this very high ACSI score. There is always room for improvement, and we will continue to work hard at improving our overall level of service for our member-owners.

Member Appreciation/Patronage Days Scheduled

We are looking forward to our next big member engagement opportunity. Plans are being made to hold four Member Appreciation/Patronage Day events later this summer. These events will include a pork chop meal for the adults and hot dogs for the kids. We will also be handing out patronage checks and we have some fun entertainment planned with inflatables for the kids, football and bean bag toss events, and musical entertainment.

The tentative dates are:

August 24	Ida County Fairgrounds
August 31	Plymouth County Fairgrounds
Sept. 2	O'Brien County Fairgrounds
Sept. 7	Terrace View Events Center in Sioux Center

We will have more details in our next newsletter, in a bill insert and on social media. In the meantime, we wanted to get these dates out so you could mark your calendars. We hope to see you at one of these fun events later this summer.

Officers Re-elected

The board of directors held a reorganization meeting at the April 1, 2021, board meeting to elect officers for the coming year. All of the officers were re-elected to their current positions:

President	Jeff Rehder
Vice President	Doug Becker
Secretary	Shirley Benson
Treasurer	Tom Wagner
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer	Steve Brown
Chief Executive Officer	Lyle Korver



Left to right: Lyle Korver, Steve Brown, Dave Bosma, Jeff Rehder, Scott Feuerhelm, Dan Hoffman, Shirley Benson, Steve Abma, Doug Becker, Chad Dau, Dale Ullrich, and Tom Wagner

The following is a brief summary of the discussions and decisions from board meetings held on February 25 and April 1, 2021:

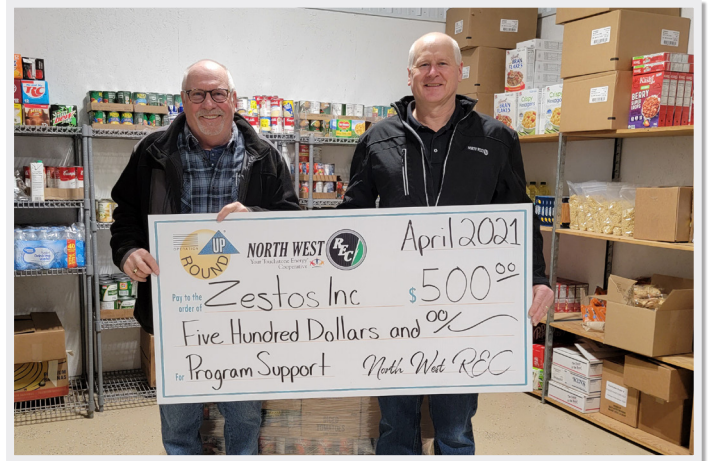
- Manager Korver provided a COVID-19 update.
- Manager Korver and Director Wagner provided an update on the February cold weather and extreme load event. We were very fortunate to be able to utilize our load management program to shed water heater and electric heat load to avoid any rolling blackout situation for our members.
- Received monthly safety, operations, and financial reports from staff.
- There was follow-up discussion from the recent strategic planning session.
- Manager Korver reported on several economic development projects that are underway. There has been an increase in activity in recent months. He also reported that Iowa Area Development Group had selected NWREC for a 2021 Impact award in the category of Business Development.
- A report on the Annual Meeting was shared.
- Approved a proposal for a new engineering work plan with DGR.
- Approved the assignment of 2020 margins in the total amount of \$3,779,292.
- Approved recommended policy revisions and a new policy on Legal Representation/Use of Attorney policy, as presented by the Policy Committee.
- Derrick Larson from Eide Bailly presented the 2020 Annual CPA audit report. It was a clean audit report again this year.
- Rob Driesen gave an update on the automatic standby generator pilot program and also on the deployment of the new load management system.
- Heard reports from Director Tom Wagner on the recent NIPCO and Basin Board Meetings.
- Director Rehder gave a CFC Board Report. He reported on the selection of Andrew Don to replace the retiring CEO, Sheldon Petersen.
- Approve Operation Round-Up donations to several charitable organizations and medical emergency situations.

OPERATION ROUND-UP *Donation*

The Operation Round-Up program is designed to provide benefits to individuals, organizations and communities in our service area. These funds are generated through a voluntary rounding up of cooperative members' electric bills to the next nearest dollar, to assist worthy causes right in your local county area.



One of the recipients this spring was Then Feed Just One based out of Le Mars, IA. Then Feed Just One is a not-for-profit corporation that packages nutritious meals for starving children and their families in Honduras, Central America. Pictured below is Member Energy Advisor, Lee Galles, presenting a \$500 Operation Round-Up check to a group from Gehlen Catholic Schools participating in a packing event.



Another recipient of an Operation Round Up donation this spring was Zestos based out of Alton, IA. Zestos is committed to fellowship, overcoming suffering by caring for basic human needs, and reaching out to those who are struggling. They help people get out of crisis so they can focus on overcoming the obstacles holding them back. Pictured above is Member Services Director, Rob Driesen, presenting the \$500 Operation Round-Up check to Rod Hofmeyer of Zestos Inc.

If you no longer wish to participate in the Operation Round Up program, please call the office or email (nwrec@nwrec.coop) and we would be happy to help.

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 more information. To receive an application of assistance, please call the office at 707-4935 or 800-766-2099.



MOVE OVER 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.

Plug into the Power of

smart choices



Each month North West REC hides a code in our Smart Choices news stories. Find the code below in the Smart Choices article, complete the prize entry registration form and submit for a chance to win a ThermoWorks ThermoPop® Instant-Read Thermometer in June.

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Don't receive Smart Choices?

Subscribe by scanning the QR code with your mobile device or visit our website:

www.nwrec.coop/smart-choices-sign-up



HIT A *Powerline Pole?* FOLLOW THESE STEPS

We all think it will never happen to us, but it can, and in an instant.

Drivers veer off the road and run into a power pole. Farmers sometimes make contact with a power line while driving tractors or other machinery. Dump or feed truck drivers raise or lower their bed and snag a power line.

People can become dangerously close or enter electricity's path. Knowing what to do in that situation can save your life. Incidents with power lines or other utility equipment break the electrical current's usual path. This can make the ground, vehicles and other equipment electrified.

If you hit a power pole, pad-mounted transformer ("green box") or other electrical equipment, **DO NOT** get out of the vehicle or cab. Instead, call 9-1-1 and wait for utility crews to come and de-energize power.



Here are some examples; in all instances, call 9-1-1:

- Your tractor or car strikes a guy wire (guy wires are the wires staked into the ground that stabilize utility poles). Under normal conditions, the guy wire is neutral, but if the wire is weakened, pulled out of the ground or otherwise damaged, it could become energized.
- You hit a patch of ice and go off the road and hit a utility pole. Or you are in a car accident and one of the vehicles strikes a power pole. Only get out of the car if there is smoke or a fire; otherwise, stay put. If there is a fire, make a clean jump or hop from your car or truck (without touching it), and hop with your feet together or shuffle keeping your feet on the ground at least 30 feet to safety. Think of the downed line sending electrical current across the ground in a ripple-like effect. Each ring of the ripple represents a different voltage. If you step from one ring to another, this is called step potential and it can electrocute you.

- You see an accident that involves a downed power line. **DO NOT** approach the scene.
- You hit a pad-mounted transformer or other type of electrical box.
- Your vehicle hits a substation.
- You ran off the road, hit a pole and it's dark out, but **YOU DON'T KNOW** if lines are down.

Other situations

- You get something stuck in power lines (drone or remote-control device): Do not try to retrieve it.
- You see kids climbing or sitting on pad-mounted transformers: Tell them not to sit or play on it.
- You are carrying a tall ladder or pole: Look up for power line locations and keep at least a 10-foot clearance at all times.
- You see kids climb trees that have power lines above: Warn them not to climb trees near power lines.
- You are using a portable generator: Never plug it into a wall outlet. This can cause backfeeding into the line and kill a lineworker or neighbor.

For questions about any of these scenarios, call North West REC at 800-766-2099. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

2021 Winner POWERLINE SCHOLARSHIP



George Ehrig Jr
from Ida Grove

Son of
George & Nicki Ehrig

Graduated from
OABCIG High School

Accepted into the
Powerline Program
at Northwest Iowa
Community College



THE POWER QUIZ

NORTH WEST REC

1. When is the deadline for submitting entries into the Shine the Light Contest? _____
2. Name one of the 5 steps for digging safely: _____
3. How much does an 85 gallon water heater cost if you have a switch? _____

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 July 10. 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.



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
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Mon-Fri

PHONE:

ORANGE CITY (712) 707-4935
(800) 766-2099

IDA GROVE (712) 364-3341

LE MARS (712) 546-4149

Outside Depository Box Available
For After Hours Payments

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

Lyle D. Korver

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Curt Ahrenholz

*Finance & Office
Services Director*

Emily Vander Velde

Editor

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