

MARCH/APRIL 2025



NVREC line crews work to replace poles on a three-phase overhead line, ensuring safe and reliable electricity for our member-owners.

## SERVING RURAL AMERICA: *the value of electric cooperatives*

When it comes to delivering electricity, not all utilities operate under the same principles. Across the United States, electric cooperatives serve an average of just eight members per mile of line, while other utilities – like investor-owned utilities (IOUs) – serve an average of 32 members per mile.

Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (NVREC) serves even fewer, with only 2.6 members per mile of line. This stark difference highlights the unique challenges that rural electric cooperatives face in providing reliable service to sparsely populated areas.

### Cost of serving rural Iowans

NVREC's residential facility charge is \$36.07 per member, meaning that per mile of line, the cooperative collects only \$93.78. Compare that to an investor-owned utility. Despite charging much lower facility fees, with 32 consumers per mile of line, they collect roughly \$300 in facility charges!

This demonstrates the financial challenges that cooperatives like NVREC face in maintaining infrastructure and delivering power efficiently to rural areas with far fewer consumers to share the cost.

### Why do cooperatives exist?

Electric cooperatives like NVREC were formed in 1936 as part of a nationwide effort to bring electricity to rural America and improve the quality of life for consumers.

Investor-owned utilities at the time refused to extend service to rural areas because it wasn't profitable enough for their shareholders. That's where electric cooperatives stepped in – to serve communities that would otherwise be left in the dark.

### Member owned, locally run

Unlike IOUs, which are driven by profits and investor returns, electric cooperatives are member-owned. Any revenue beyond operating costs is returned to members in the form of pa-

tronage dividends, rather than being paid out to distant investors. Additionally, NVREC's board of directors isn't composed of outside investors seeking financial gain – they are local residents who live in the same communities NVREC serves. They work to ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of all members.

### Supporting rural communities

NVREC is more than just a power provider – it is an essential part of the community, reinvesting in local infrastructure, ensuring grid reliability, and keeping electricity affordable for member-owners.

While the numbers may show that NVREC and electric cooperatives face greater financial challenges compared to IOUs, we will continue to prioritize service over profit and work to improve the quality of life in rural Iowa.

Next time you flip a light switch, remember that NVREC isn't just your power provider – it's your cooperative, working for you and your neighbors.

# Energy issues at forefront of legislative session



**Haley Moon**  
Senior Manager of Policy & Advocacy, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

Energy policy remains a top priority for Iowa lawmakers in the current state legislative session. Since the 91st General Assembly began on January 13, legislative leaders and Gov. Kim Reynolds have emphasized key issues that could impact how electricity reaches Iowans in their homes and businesses. As always, Iowa's electric cooperatives are actively engaged in these discussions to ensure the voices of co-op member-consumers are heard and that the best interests of rural Iowa are considered.

The following are key legislative issues under discussion and their potential impact on your local electric cooperative.

## Service territory protections

Protecting the state's defined electric service areas remains the top priority for Iowa's electric cooperatives. This law, established nearly 50 years ago, is essential for cooperatives to invest in local economic development, maintain affordable rates, and ensure reliable service. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) remains vigilant in safeguarding these protections from legislative proposals that could undermine them. Learn more at [\*Protect\*](#)

*RuralIowa.com*.

## Shady solar developments

Proposals in the legislature aim to establish third-party community solar programs in Iowa. These arrangements are different from the community solar programs available from some Iowa electric co-ops. You may have received information at your home or heard of neighbors being approached about subscribing to or leasing land for non co-op community solar projects.

While electric cooperatives support a diverse energy generation mix, there are concerns that these entities do not adhere to the same consumer protection standards required of public utilities. Additionally, these projects could disrupt assigned service territories that are crucial for co-ops.

If you have questions about solar energy or are approached by one of these third-party entities, please contact your local cooperative for more information.

## Governor's energy priorities

Gov. Reynolds has outlined several energy-related priorities aimed at shaping Iowa's future in energy generation, transmission, and distribution. These initiatives cover a wide range of topics, including how investor-owned utilities plan for and set rates and invest in new energy projects, ways the state of Iowa can examine the potential

of nuclear energy, and making funds available for water infrastructure projects.

One issue of particular importance to electric cooperatives is the Right of First Refusal (ROFR). ROFR grants Iowa-based electric utilities the first opportunity to construct and maintain regional transmission projects within the state. Electric cooperatives support ROFR, as it enables Iowa's utilities to continue working together on critical infrastructure projects that help maintain reliable electricity service.

Iowa's utilities employ thousands of Iowans to design, maintain, and repair power lines in the state to ensure power continues to flow during our most extreme weather conditions. They invest in our communities and utilize Iowa companies as suppliers while working with landowners to protect Iowans' interests. Learn more at [\*IowaElectricHomeTeam.com\*](#).

## Legislative engagement

As the legislative session progresses, your local electric cooperative directors and staff are actively engaging with lawmakers to advocate for policies that protect and strengthen rural Iowa's energy future.

For more information on these issues or to stay updated on legislative developments, please reach out to Nishnabotna Valley REC in Harlan at **712-755-2166** or email us at [\*info@nvrec.com\*](mailto:info@nvrec.com).



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Sign up for SmartHub to manage your account, view and pay your bill, monitor usage, and get cooperative news and alerts!

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Scan the QR code or go to [\*SmartHubApp.com\*](https://SmartHubApp.com) to download the app!



# Be storm ready: preparedness is the best defense

Spring is on our doorstep, bringing many of our favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, time spent working in the garden, and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

Unfortunately, spring and summer can also create the perfect conditions for severe storms.

Nishnabotna Valley REC crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary safety precautions while repairing downed lines.

Members are also encouraged to practice safety and preparedness during storms and outages.



## Be storm ready

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials.
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one loca-

tion.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronics. This will help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely. Remember to never operate indoors and only use in a well ventilated area.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check NVREC's Facebook page for restoration updates.

Severe storms can occasionally take down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it.

If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

If you experience an outage, please don't report it on Facebook. Instead, call our outage reporting number at (800) 234-5122. This is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.

Hopefully, our members don't experience severe storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Nishnabotna Valley REC, we recommend that you make a plan today – because storm preparedness is always our best defense.



## National Safe Digging Month

National Safe Digging Month is a great reminder to always contact 811 before you dig!

No matter how small your next home digging project is, remember to keep yourself and your community safe by contacting 811 to

have the approximate location of buried utilities marked with paint or flags before breaking ground.

**IOWA 811**  
**ONE CALL**<sup>SM</sup>  
IowaOneCall.com

Contact 811 before you dig. [811beforeyoudig.com](http://811beforeyoudig.com)

# Planning is key when building a new grain bin

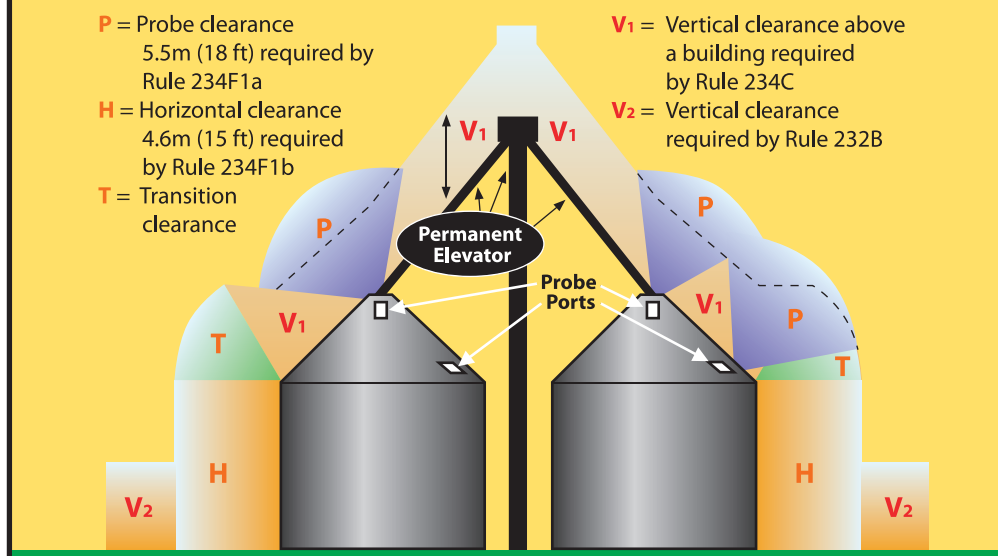
Each year, NVREC has several requests from members to build services for new grain bin facilities, so we want to remind you of the proper clearance rules concerning electric lines.

The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable augers, conveyors and elevators, and permanent equipment. In fact, the Iowa Electrical Code Chapter 199 – 25.2(3) b states: an electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearance 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 elevators built after December 24, 1997. The Iowa Utilities Commission has adopted this language.

Nishnabotna Valley REC is required by the Iowa Utilities Commission to provide this annual notice to farms, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. The drawings on this page show the specific clearances regulations – or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one. If you have questions concerning clearance regulations, please call NVREC at 712-755-2166 or North-west Iowa Power Cooperative at 712-546-4141.

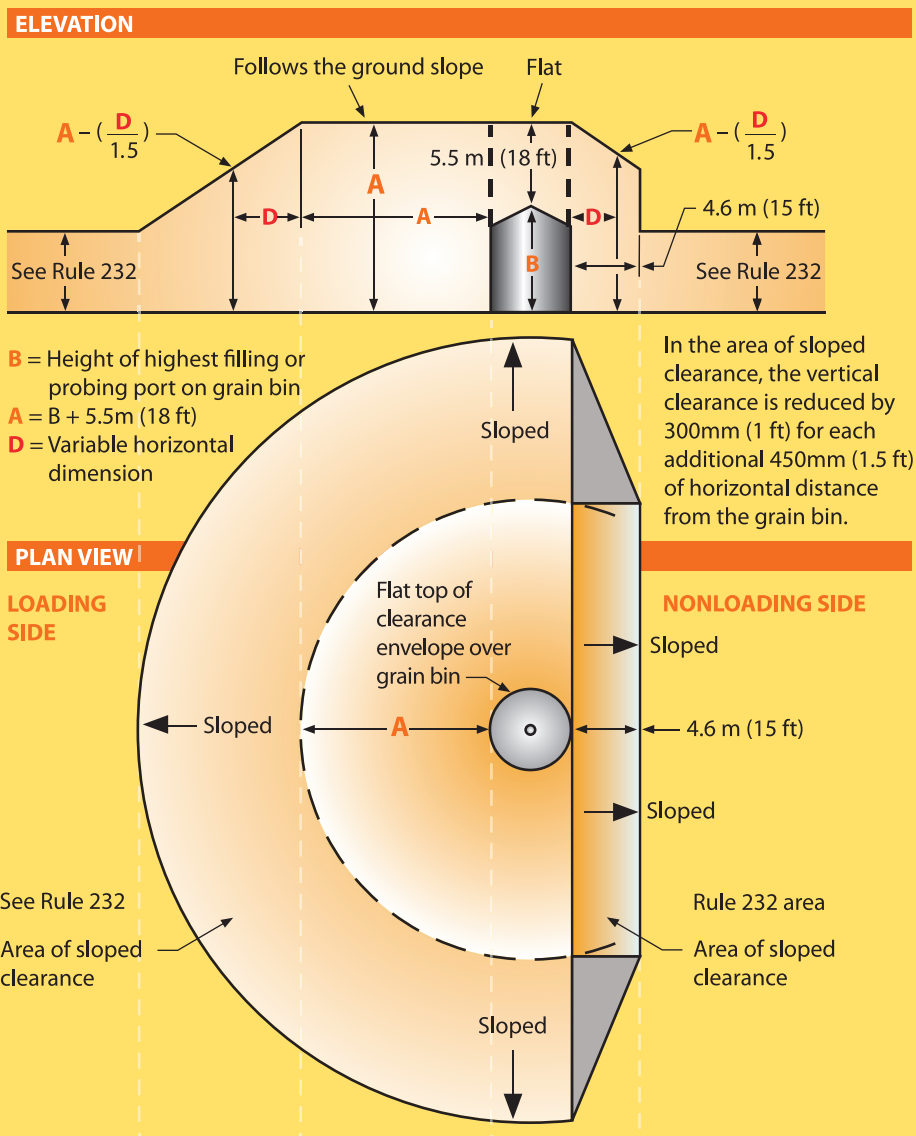
**Disclaimer:** These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the 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.

## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators



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## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators



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*Celebrating lineworkers of the past, present, and future!*

# **LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY** **FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2025**



**Thank you to our amazing lineworkers for all your hard work and dedication!**  
(L to R) Jeremiah Ruby, Dillon Clark, Garrett Bundy, Mason Irlbeck, Dave Curren, Jesse Lee, Jarek Richardson, Dave Monson, Aaron Nippert, and Jacob Cook (not pictured).

## **Operation Round-Up** *Rounding up your bill to help others*

### **WHAT IS OPERATION ROUND-UP®?**

Operation Round-Up® is a program that allows Nishnabotna Valley REC consumer-owners to make a difference in their own communities. Operation Round-Up® allows you to "round-up" your monthly electric bills and donate the difference to a charitable fund to be used in Nishnabotna Valley REC's service territory. The minimum amount you contribute each month is \$0.01, and the maximum is \$0.99.

### **HOW DOES OPERATION ROUND-UP® WORK?**

If you choose to participate, your electric bill will be rounded-up to the next highest dollar each month. For example, if your electric bill is \$52.71, an additional balance of 29 cents will be added, making your bill an even \$53.00.

### **HOW WILL THE FUNDS BE USED?**

Donations are made from the fund to non-profit organizations and individuals in need and also for family emergency disasters. The program has been successfully implemented in more than 200 electric co-ops across the nation. The program is administered by Nishnabotna Valley REC's board of directors.

Application forms are available at the REC office. Applications should be received no later than the 15th of the month at the end of the quarter. Contributions to the fund are not tax deductible.

By joining with other Nishnabotna Valley REC members, your small monthly donation can make a bigger impact. It's what a cooperative is all about. If you would like to sign up for this worthwhile program and help make a difference, please fill out this form and return it to our office: **NVREC, P. O. Box 714, Harlan, IA 51537.**



### **Nishnabotna Valley REC** **Authorization for Operation Round-Up®**

Yes, I would like to participate in the community service program Operation Round-Up®. I understand that my electric bill will be rounded up to the next highest dollar. Those funds will be used for non-profit community activities and programs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Protecting those who work along our roads

More than eight years ago, Gov. Kim Reynolds expanded Iowa's Move Over and Slow Down law, requiring drivers to move over or slow down when passing utility and emergency vehicles on the side of the road.

Unfortunately, many motorists still fail to follow this law, leading to accidents that injure or even take the lives of utility workers, road construction crews, and law enforcement officers.

## The risks are real

These dedicated professionals are already performing dangerous work, often in harsh conditions, to keep our communities safe and operational. The last thing they should have to worry about is a distracted driver

speeding past, unaware of their presence. Unfortunately, too many drivers continue to be distracted by passengers, mobile phones, or other activities, putting roadside workers at risk.

## Keeping our linemen safe

At Nishnabotna Valley REC, we are deeply concerned about the safety of our linemen, who work on electric poles, overhead and underground services, and other equipment to ensure reliable power for our members.

Each day, they put their lives on the line to maintain and restore electricity in our communities. We want every lineman to return home safely to their families each night.

## Move over or slow down

Next time you see a utility vehicle, emergency responder, or road crew with flashing caution lights, take action:

- Move over to the next lane when possible.
- If moving over isn't safe, slow down significantly to give workers space.
- Stay alert and avoid distractions while driving near work zones.

This simple act of consideration and compliance with the law can save lives.

Let's work together to ensure the safety of those who keep our roads, utilities, and communities running smoothly.



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





# 5 Tips To GO GREEN for St. Patrick's Day



## 1. Replace your HVAC filter.

These typically need replacing every three months, though factors like pets, climate and system age can affect the timing.

## 2. Install a smart thermostat.

A smart thermostat offers convenience, savings and efficiency by adjusting the temperature based on your schedule — reducing usage when no one is home.

## 3. Cut energy use during peak hours.

In spring, peak electricity hours are usually in the evening. Reduce usage by visiting a park, a theater or dining out.

## 4. Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances.

Look for appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified, using 10 to 15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov.

## 5. Save energy through rebate programs for solar, battery storage or electric vehicles.

Check with utilities and government programs for rebates and incentives to help make these technologies more accessible.

Learn more at:



## NVREC sponsors Myrtue Medical community kids festival in April

Nishnabotna Valley REC is excited to help sponsor Myrtue Medical Center's Community Kids Festival on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at Veterans Auditorium in Harlan from 9:00–11:00 a.m.

This fun-filled event is designed for children from preschool through 5th grade, offering hands-on activities that promote health, safety, and wellness.

Families are invited to take part in the interactive booths and enjoy a morning of learning and fun.

At the Nishnabotna Val-

ley REC booth, kids can learn valuable electrical safety tips while picking up fun safety-themed giveaways. Plus, they'll get to meet LED Lucy, our bright and friendly mascot.



## Winter heat moratorium ends

Iowa's winter home heating moratorium protects customers certified for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), from electric or natural gas service disconnection from November 1 through April 1.

Beginning April 1, 2025, energy assistance customers could be subject to service disconnection for unpaid bills, with proper notice. To avoid service disconnection, contact NVREC at 712-755-2166 if you have unpaid electrical bills.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

1317 Chatburn Avenue, PO Box 714 • Harlan, Iowa 51537

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30am to 4:00pm

Telephone: (712) 755-2166 • Fax: (712) 755-2351

Website: NVREC.com • Follow us on Facebook!

Outages after hours, holidays, weekends: (800) 234-5122

*Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

President.....Donna Olson  
Vice President .....Gene Kenkel  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Bryan Greve  
Director .....Dave Applegate  
Director .....Darrell Stamp  
Director .....Tom Pattee

Director .....Galen Grabill  
Chief Executive Officer .....Bill McKim  
Director of Operations .....Kert Barnum  
Manager of Administrative Services.....Kara Meiners  
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## Nishnabotna Valley REC

PO Box 714

Harlan, IA 51537

Address Service Requested

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*Nishnabotna Valley REC will provide safe and reliable electric service to its members in a valuable, sustainable, and environmentally responsible manner.*

### **The value of rural electric cooperatives**

*See page 1*



### **Energy policy top priority for Iowa lawmakers**

*See page 2*

### **NVREC sponsors kids festival**

*See page 7*

### **Winter heat moratorium ending**

*See page 7*



**Join us in celebrating a new face in the NVREC family!**

NVREC Member Services Coordinator Kylie Beebe and her fiancé, Austin Adair, welcomed their daughter Paisley Mae into the world in August of 2024. Wishing this sweet little one lots of love and joy as she continues to grow!