

Get the facts before signing solar project lease

Recently, landowners across rural Iowa report having 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 all contracts, the devil is in the details.

Most of these letters are coming from companies outside of Iowa looking to lease land for future solar projects. Many of these letters erroneously refer to Iowa law; referencing a failed piece of state legislation (Senate File 2356) introduced last session. In fact, Iowa's

electric cooperatives and many other groups registered in opposition to the legislation due to its likely negative impact on electric co-ops and our members.

Some solicitations also falsely claim local support for their solar initiative or that the electric output would somehow benefit the landowner's neighbors or the local electric cooperative. Letters also frequently include deceptive endorsements attributed to the Iowa Farm Bureau (IFB). This claim is untrue and IFB's legal team has worked to remove these perceived endorsements.

Before signing any agreement or contract, always consult your legal coun-

sel. They 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.

If you have received such a letter, or would like more information, please visit the office or call us at (712) 755-2166.

Member appreciation, annual meeting draw large crowd to Veterans Memorial Auditorium



Over 550 members attended the August Member Appreciation Event and Annual Meeting. See more photos from the event on page 6!

Member-owners collect prizes

Member-owners who attended this year's member appreciation event were entered into a drawing to win great door prizes again this year. We appreciate all the members who attended the event and congratulate our winners!



Steve Leinen of Panama won a Rock&Rocker pressure washer.



Lanny Petsche of Harlan won a Nostalgia ice cream maker.



Linda Reinig of Portsmouth won a Lefant robotic vacuum.

Greve, Applegate reelected to board

District 5 Director Bryan Greve and District 6 Director Dave Applegate were both reelected to the Nishnabotna Valley REC board of directors at the annual meeting in August. Both candidates ran unopposed.

Following the annual meeting, the board organizational meeting was held. The officer positions remained the same with Donna Olson reelected to serve as president, Gene Kenkel to serve as vice president, and Bryan Greve to serve as secretary-treasurer.



Bryan Greve



Dave Applegate

Electric bill credit winners

Members who cast a ballot in this year's director election, either by mail, at the annual meeting, or by dropping it off at the office, were entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit. These six members will receive a bill credit on their next electric bill.

Congratulations to the following members:

Scott Assmann
Robbie Bissen

William Hastert
Roger McMartin

Tom Powers
Jeffrey Walton

Do not overlook overhead power lines

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, Nishnabotna Valley REC wants to remind you that failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require at least 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large

transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:

Home maintenance

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them.

Other safety tips include:

- *Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.*
- *Be careful when working on or around your roof.*
- *Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.*

Yard work

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding.

Also:

- *Do not trim trees near power lines; instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.*
- *Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.*

Farming

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings.

After this summer's severe storms, many lines and poles could have experienced significant damage, causing line clearance to be altered.

Be especially cautious while using larger equipment such as sprayers, dump trucks, and augers.

At work

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes, concrete pump truck extensions, and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

Other reminders

Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line, and always consider a downed line to be energized. Warn others to stay away. Call 9-1-1 to report it.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant.



OFFICIAL NOTICE OF RATE INCREASE

On August 29, 2024 Nishnabotna Valley REC's board of directors approved an increase in rates and charges affecting prices for electricity service that you receive.

This adjustment is necessitated by an increase in the cost of wholesale power. The increase will apply to your electricity consumption beginning November 1, 2024.

The increase in annual revenues will be approximately

\$98,605 or 0.55 percent.

Although the impact of the increase on your bill will vary depending on the type and extent of usage, average monthly increases per customer for the primary customer classes are found below. Charges to this account shall be supported so that a description of each type of charge will be readily available.

Current Monthly Customer Class	Current Monthly Rate	Monthly Increase	New Monthly Rate	Percent Increase
6.) Controlled Interruptible Heat	\$106.72	\$6.38	\$113.10	5.98%
7.) Controlled Dual Fuel	\$83.84	\$5.38	\$89.22	6.42%
9.) Uncontrolled Electric Heat	\$178.69	\$8.19	\$186.88	4.58%

A written explanation of current rate schedules and charges is available without charge from our local business office. If you have any questions, please contact our business office at (712) 755-2166.

WINTER EFFICIENCY

Tips to save on energy bills this heating season



Todd Bruck

Electric Service Foreman,
Nishnabotna Valley REC

With winter on the horizon, we all know that colder weather is on the way. And here in Iowa that means two things are certain: falling temperatures and rising electricity usage.

From increased lighting load to brighten up those longer nights to added heating load as HVAC systems run longer and more often to fight against the frigid outdoor temps, the winter heating season can be costly for both members and the cooperative.

During the winter, members tend to use electricity more heavily early in the mornings and later in the evenings. These two "peak" times often contribute to the co-op's peak demand, the period of highest electrical use across our system.

Our wholesale power providers bill us, not only for the energy our members consume, but also for our system's peak monthly usage. These demand costs make up a significant portion of our wholesale power costs and are ultimately reflected in

our rates.

By taking some simple steps, you can keep your electric bill lower, and reduce our wholesale demand costs to help keep everyone's rates more affordable.

• Turn down the thermostat:

Even just a few degrees can make a difference!

In fact, for every degree you lower your thermostat in the winter, you can save between one and three percent on your heating bills.

• Seal windows and doors:

Air leaks and drafts force your system to work harder than necessary.

Be sure to check and seal any leaks around exterior doors and windows with caulk and weatherstripping.

• Level out the load:

When you can, try to stagger the use of major appliances like washers and dryers, dishwashers, and ovens. This helps lower not only your individual electric demand but also reduces the co-op's overall system demand.

Using small countertop appliances like an air fryer instead of an oven is a great way to help save energy and lower demand.

• Monthly maintenance

Be sure that your heating system is running efficiently by doing regular maintenance.

Even small things like checking and replacing a dirty furnace filter can make a big difference. A clogged air filter can cause your home's HVAC system to work harder, using up to 15 percent more energy.

• Keep it cold:

When it's possible, use cold water to reduce the cost of water heating.

By setting your water heater to 120 degrees, you can help save energy and reduce mineral buildup in your pipes.

• Unplug unused electronics:

You can easily eliminate unnecessary energy use by unplugging devices when you're not using them.

Even when turned off, many modern electronics like televisions run in standby mode and can consume energy!

Plugging devices into a power strip makes it even easier to turn them all off at once with the push of a button or the click of a switch.

To learn more and discover more energy efficiency tips, visit NVREC.com/saveenergy.

Iowa Youth Leadership Academy

Students who attend online sessions could win AirPods, chance for \$1,000 college scholarship

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Nishnabotna Valley 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 as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to offer another opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative careers, 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 IowaYouthTour.com.

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:

• **Cooperative Business Model:**

Tuesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m.

• **Rural Iowa Advocacy:**

Thursday, October 17, 7:00 p.m.

• **Leadership:**

Thursday, October 24, 7:00 p.m.

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. Students who register by October 1 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the sessions, students will be inspired by the line-up of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and learn about leadership development from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear from former Iowa Youth Tour students who pursued their passion for government service and leadership after attending the week-long trip to Washington, D.C. The 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is slated for June 15-21 next summer.

Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com. You may also contact Janell Leinen at jleinen@nvrec.com or (712) 755-2166 for more information.

Sign up for Operation Round-Up and help your neighbors

What is Operation Round-Up®?

Operation Round-Up® is a program that allows Nishnabotna Valley REC member-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; 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. 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 and are reviewed as needed.

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.

Nishnabotna Valley REC
Operation Round-Up
PO 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: _____

MEMBER EVENT, ANNUAL MEETING DRAWS HUNDREDS



Galen Grabill, Donna Olson, and the rest of your NVREC board of directors helped serve food at the recent member appreciation event. The food was provided by Main Street Market.



Director of Operations Kert Barnum assisted a young member at the new Watt Shot paintball booth. The debut of the attraction this year was a hit with both kids and adults.



Linemen Garrett Bundy and Jake Cook help a member climb in for a ride in a bucket truck, one of the evening's family-friendly activities.



Linemen Aaron Nippert and Mason Irlbeck handed out cupcakes provided by Melissa Schmitz and Mary's Bake Shop.



Lineman Dillon Clark worked at the electrical farm safety display, visiting with members about electrical hazards as they waited in line for the meal.



Member Care Specialist LaDonna Havick greeted members as they entered the event, giving out information and answering questions about our bill management app, SmartHub.

2024-2025 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**ATTENTION: RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS
NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?**

The 2024-2025 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season.

The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply, Dial 2-1-1, or please visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/liheap> to locate and contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP
Iowa Department of Health & Human Services
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

INCOME MAXIMUMS

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$30,120
2	\$40,880
3	\$51,640
4	\$62,400
5	\$73,160
6	\$83,920
7	\$94,680
8	\$105,440

For households with more than eight members, add \$10,760 for each additional member.

WHEN TO APPLY:

- **Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled:**
October 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025
- **All other households:**
November 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

WHAT TO TAKE:

- **Proof of Income** (for all household members age 18, and over)
Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the previous 30 days, the last 12 months, or the last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- **Proof of Social Security Numbers for all household members** (documentation required)
- **Recent heat bill**
- **Recent electric bill**

WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application or a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

Note - Additional countable income and/or income verification not listed above may be required for eligibility determination



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-TreasurerBryan Greve
DirectorDave Applegate
DirectorDarrell Stamp
Director Tom Pattee

Director Galen Grabill
Chief Executive Officer Bill McKim
Director of Operations Kert Barnum
Manager of Administrative Services..... Kara Meiners
Communication Specialist..... Janell Leinen

Nishnabotna Valley REC

PO Box 714

Harlan, IA 51537

Address Correction Requested



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.

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TEST DRIVE[®] EVENT

Friday, September 27 • Noon - 7:00 PM

Nishnabotna Valley REC Office • 1317 Chatburn Ave., Harlan

LEARN IF AN EV IS RIGHT FOR YOU!



NVREC, in conjunction with our DRIVE[®] Electric Vehicle Car Club, will be offering test drives of a Ford F-150 Lightning.

Drop in to learn about the pros and cons of EVs and how their widespread adoption may impact our local distribution system.

More information on electric vehicles at NVREC.com/EV