

HIGHLINES

January 2018

A publication for members of Pella Cooperative Electric

End Use Survey

Although we have not received the results of our end use survey, we have been informed that Pella Cooperative Electric received a 41.6 percent response rate from the members who received this survey. This was the second-highest response rate among 13 Iowa cooperatives that participated in the end use survey this year.

We would like to extend our thanks to those of you who returned the survey and announce the winners of a \$25.00 credit from a random drawing from the participants.

The winners are:

- Myron Linn
- David Dettmann
- Darrell Maasdam
- Galen Rozenboom

A graphic with an orange background. On the left is a white lightbulb with radiating lines above it. To the right of the lightbulb, the year '2018' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Above the year, the text 'Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.

2018

Wishing you the happiest of New Years from the directors and employees of your Pella Cooperative Electric

Working for You: Power Outages Q & A

At Pella Cooperative Electric, we know it can be frustrating when the power goes out. The flip of a switch isn't so convenient if nothing happens. Though we are committed to providing electric service that is safe, affordable and reliable, there are times when you might question what your cooperative is doing to keep the power flowing. Here are a few common questions we receive at the cooperative office that might help clear things up.

Why do my neighbors have power during an outage and I don't?

We realize that it can be frustrating to see lights across the road when you are sitting in the dark. The power grid is broken into sections, so it's possible that your neighbors are on a different electric line or there may be trouble just on the portion supplying your immediate area. The cause of the outage may be isolated to one transformer or a group of transformers, or the problem may affect only the power lines connecting to your house or business. Keep in mind, too, that your neighbors might own a generator that provides



Pella Cooperative Electric line crews go out no matter the weather to get the power back on, like during this ice storm a few years ago.

electricity during an outage.

Why can't you tell me exactly when my power will be restored?

We never know what we are going to find when we respond to a call, so it's hard to predict when we'll have the power back on. When a crew arrives to make repairs, we investigate the cause of the outage first. Often we find problems that require additional time, materials, equipment or crews than what we anticipated. This can be especially true when we have problems with underground lines because we may be required to dig to access and repair the line.

The length of the outage depends on how many total outages we have across the system as well. When there are several outages to restore at one time, we work to restore power to the largest numbers of affected members in the shortest amount of time. This is an efficient way to restore power outages, but sometimes it can impact how quickly we're able to respond to an outage that may only affect one or two members.

How can I stay informed of your progress during an outage?

Pella Cooperative Electric maintains an Outage Center on our website that provides real-time updates. This website is also found at www.iowarec.org/outages. This map shows you how many accounts are showing outages per county. Updates are often posted on our Facebook page also.

How Can We Better Serve You in 2018?



Jon Miles, CEO
Pella Cooperative Electric

It's amazing what we learn by listening and observing. New products and services are more likely to gain the satisfaction of consumers when their introduction follows market research.

Here at Pella Cooperative Electric Association, we provide our members with a mobile application enabling you to check the status of your electric service, and receive real-time updates on energy use.

This mobile application is just one new way of staying connected with your cooperative. At PCEA, we are committed to providing the exceptional service you expect as a member.

Our goal is to find ways to help you control energy costs. That's why we communicate with you about energy prices and ways we can work together to help ease the burden on your wallet.

Listening improves our understanding, builds lasting trust and strengthens relationships with our members. It's also crucial to collaboration and success.

That's why PCEA still loves face time with our members. Our annual meeting is a social event for our whole Cooperative family. We hope you'll make plans now to join us April 3, 2018 at Pella Christian High School for an evening of Cooperative business, fun and prizes.

How do we serve you better in 2018? The same way many of us try to serve our community and family each day, by listening. In our offices, on telephones, through social media exchanges and in our face-to-face meetings, we're ready to listen.

When you have questions about energy efficiency, electrical service or any of our products or services, just ask us. When we know just what you want, we're in a better position to deliver successful results. So, drop in and see us! We're always glad to hear from you.

Calling High School Sophomores and Juniors: 2018 Youth Tour Opportunity

High school sophomores, juniors and students who hold the status equivalent to a sophomore or junior in an accredited home-based school are invited to apply now for a chance at a one week, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 8-14, 2018. This unique trip is a once in a lifetime opportunity to watch history come alive!

Each year, Pella Cooperative Electric sponsors one student from our service territory to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour. Eligible students must have a parent or guardian who is a current member-owner of Pella Cooperative Electric. Candidates need to complete an application, answer a few questions about themselves, and write an essay. All materials must be received by Pella Cooperative Electric no later than March 30, 2018.

Annually, more than 1,600 students from across the country attend Youth Tour where they have the opportunity to visit historical sites, explore the Smithsonian Institution, meet Iowa's Congressional leaders, spend a day on Capitol Hill, explore memorial mall, cruise down the Potomac River and much more.

The Youth Tour, as it is formally known, has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., every year since the 1950s. Pella Cooperative Electric participates to help aid in the development of our younger generation's education.

To download the application and find more information, visit www.pella-cea.org and look under the community tab. You can also request an application by contacting our office at (641) 628-1040 or (800) 619-1040.

A promotional poster for the Iowa Youth Tour 2018. The background is blue with a white sunburst pattern. At the top, it says "COURTESY OF YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE" in small white letters. Below that, in large white letters, is "WIN A WEEK-LONG TRIP". The central graphic features the Iowa State Capitol dome inside a circular frame with the words "IOWA YOUTH TOUR" around it. A red banner across the middle says "Washington D.C." in white. Below the banner, the year "2018" is written in large, white, stylized numbers. At the bottom, there are three small photos showing groups of students. Below the photos is a list of activities in white text on a blue background: "Join 1,800 other students from across the country", "Meet Iowa's members of Congress", "Tour historic sights", "Take a boat cruise on the Potomac River", "Visit Smithsonian museums", "Make new friends", "Learn more about electric cooperatives", and "Sharpen your leadership skills". At the very bottom, in a white box with a red border, it says "NEXT YOUTH TOUR · JUNE 8-14, 2018".

SAVE THE DATE: Pella Cooperative Electric Annual Meeting April 3, 2018

Improve Home Efficiency: A Resolution with a Big Impact

Eat more vegetables. Eat less chocolate. Exercise three times per week. Spend more time on your hobbies.

New Year's resolutions give us the opportunity to start fresh and consider changes to our habits that lead to personal improvement. But what if our personal resolutions had a bigger impact?

There's one that can – a resolution for a more energy efficient 2018.

Collectively, small changes add up to big savings, and a resolution for improved efficiency at your home could benefit not just your personal budget, but also the environment.



4 Tips for a more efficient 2018

1. Make power strips work for you. Plugged-in appliances and electronics use small amounts of power even when they are turned off. This is called phantom energy use, and it can be eliminated, in the flip of a switch, if your electronics are plugged into a power strip. According to Energy.gov you can save \$100 per year by using power strips to reduce phantom

load. Just be careful to never overload a power strip.

2. Use sunlight to help heat your home. On bright, sunny, winter days, open your blinds or curtains to let the natural light from the sun warm up your home. Be sure to close your window treatments as the sun begins to set.

3. Save hot water in three ways. It takes energy to heat water, and you can save energy by: 1) adjusting your water heater's setting to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. If you've never adjusted it, chances are it is set at 140 degrees. 2) Installing low-flow showerheads, which will help not only with your energy bill for heating the water, but also with your water bill because you'll use less! 3) Washing clothes in cold water.

4. Be smart about your thermostat. You can save as much as 10 percent on heating and cooling per year by turning your thermostat back 7-10 degrees for eight hours a day in the winter. You can set a smart or programmable thermostat to do this automatically or be diligent about your manual thermostat when you're away from home or at night.

State Law Requires Notification of Alternate Energy Production

In 2012, the Iowa Legislature approved a bill that requires notification to electric utilities prior to installing an alternative energy generator. The notification requirement applies to any type of electric generating technology including:

- Solar
- Wind Turbine
- Waste management
- Resource recovery
- Refuse-derived fuel
- Agricultural crops or residue
- Wood-burning facility that will be connected to an electric transmission or distribution line.



Under this legislation, the owner of an alternative energy production facility must provide written notification to their electric utility at least 30 days before construction or installation of a generator.

If you are considering installing an alternative energy system, please contact Pella Cooperative Electric at (800) 619-1040. Let us provide information and assistance before you decide to purchase any type of alternative energy system that requires interconnection with the electric grid.

Winter Storm Checklist

What Should You Do?

Maintain heating equipment with annual cleanings and inspections.

Insulate your home by installing storm windows or adding plastic.

Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing.

Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep warm and dry and to maintain your footing.

Listen to the news or the National Weather Service on the radio for critical info.

Bring pets indoors during extreme winter weather.



Visit the Pella Cooperative Electric Facebook page for updates on any weather-related outages in your area.

National Institute of Fire and Safety Training

Bright Idea



Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3-4 percent per year on water heating.

Source: energy.gov

Generator Safety: Don't Get Left Out in the Cold

Pella Cooperative Electric members who use generators must be mindful of risks such as electric shock and toxic exhaust.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than half of the annual accidents with generators occur between November and February, the coldest months of the year. Here are some tips for the safe preparation and operation of generators this winter.

Since generators come in a variety of sizes, capacities and power sources, begin by reading and following all manufacturer instructions. Also, before you use a generator, inspect it for damage. If no damage is found, prepare it for use in an area outside of the home and away from dangerous or wet conditions.

Because carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless, always run

the machine outdoors, as carbon monoxide levels may be fatal within minutes in enclosed areas. Be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which include headaches, dizziness, confusion, fatigue and nausea. If you suspect that someone has been exposed to carbon monoxide, move them into fresh air immediately. It is also a good idea to install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Follow the instructions in the manufacturer's guide for proper placement and test the batteries regularly.

Carbon monoxide produced by generators is not the only hazard from generator use. If you are not careful with the preparation of a portable or standby generator, you can put the lives of others in danger because of back feed. Back feed is a situation where a generator is feeding electricity back through your electrical

system and meters into the power lines. This jeopardizes the safety of line crews working to restore power as well as anyone who may be near the down or sagging line that becomes energized.

To prevent back feed, standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. This device automatically separates your home system from the utility system. Portable generators should never be plugged directly into a home outlet or electrical system. Use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator for power. Your generator should have more output than the wattage of the appliances you will plug into it.

Be sure to keep pets and children a safe distance away. When the generator needs a refill on gasoline, turn off the machine for at least 10 minutes so that fumes can dissipate.

TIPS FOR THE PROPER INSTALLATION AND USE OF GENERATORS

	NEVER operate a generator INSIDE your home or in other enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces, including GARAGES .		Make sure your generator is properly grounded and used with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).		Install battery-operated CO ALARMS or plug-in CO alarms with a battery backup inside the home.
	A generator is a TEMPORARY power source and should NEVER be used as a permanent solution.		Use only extension cords that have a THREE-PRONGED plug and are rated for the intended load.		Do NOT OVERLOAD the generator.
	NEVER connect generators directly to household wiring without first installing a TRANSFER SWITCH . This prevents backfeeding which could electrocute utility workers making repairs.		Your home generator should be installed by a QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN and bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as UL, Intertek or CSA.		The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends generators be positioned at least 20 FEET from doors, windows and vents to prevent CO from entering the home.

ESFi For more information about portable generators and carbon monoxide safety visit www.esfi.org

Required Notice of Complaints

The Iowa Utilities Board requires that all non-rate regulated utilities post the following notice to its membership. If a member has a problem with his/her service, please call or write Pella Cooperative Electric, PO Box 106, Pella, IA 50219, or call toll free at (800) 619-1040.

If your complaint is related to Pella Cooperative Electric's service rather than its rates, and Pella Cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by:

1. calling (515) 725-7321 or toll-free (877) 545-4450;
2. writing to 1375 E. Court Ave., Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or
3. sending an email to customer@iub.iowa.gov

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Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative. The co-op exists to provide electric service at cost. It is the members (anyone who gets electricity from the cooperative), not outside investors, that own and control the co-op. Cooperatives are governed by a member-elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors: Bryce Arkema, Darrell Boot, Carroll Hoksbergen, Steve Inskeep, Bob Van Soelen, Norman Van Zante, Duane Ver Ploeg, and CEO Jon Miles.