



JUNE 2024

HIGHLINES

NEWS FOR THE MEMBERS OF PELLA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

Nominate a Local Volunteer by June 30th

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 \$3,000 for their local charity or nonprofit.

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



Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this contest celebrates the people who make our communities better. Three winners will be announced in September and each will receive a \$3,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit. The winners will also be featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

How to Nominate

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from Pella Cooperative Electric, 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.

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 difference in the community and how might their local charity/nonprofit use the \$3,000 donation?

Help us shine the light on our community volunteers; make a nomination by June 30!

Pella Cooperative Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

2615 Washington St.
PO Box 106
Pella, IA 50219

1-800-619-1040
www.pella-cea.org
service@pella-cea.org



Open weekdays: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm;
excluding holidays



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Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative, governed by an elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. See pella-cea.org > Nondiscrimination Statement for more information.

Energy Scams Unmasked

Consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods.

Pella Cooperative Electric wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information. This month, we'd like to share updates on some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Recent Utility Scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves--either physically or digitally--as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately.

Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source.

Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage--and what's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is--it's likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.



Spotting a Scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam.

You've probably noticed that many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What PCEA Will (and Won't) Do

PCEA will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notice or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

PCEA will never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in-person, our website, and scheduled payments through your SmartHub account.

Avoiding Scams

Whether in-person, over the phone or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a PCEA employee requesting banking or other personal information.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, just give us a quick call at 1-800-619-1040 so we can assist. PCEA wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.

Congratulations to Our 2024 Scholarship Winners

As one of the seven Cooperative Principles, “Concern for Community” is demonstrated by Pella Cooperative Electric with its belief in empowering our youth. One of the ways the co-op adheres to this principle is through a \$1,000 scholarship to a student in each school district within the co-op’s service territory. These school districts include Grinnell, Knoxville, Lynnville-Sully, Newton, North Mahaska, PCM, Pella Christian, Pella High, Pleasantville, Twin Cedars, and a homeschool student.



Alexy Conover, a senior at Lynnville-Sully High School, was the district’s scholarship winner. Conover will be attending South Dakota State University majoring in natural resource law enforcement.



Kate Schneider, a senior at Knoxville High School, was Knoxville’s winner. Schneider will be attending Central College majoring in elementary education.



Lydia Vos, a senior at Pella High School was Pella’s scholarship winner. Vos will be attending Liberty University majoring in psychology.



Hally Mull, a senior at Pleasantville High School, was the district’s scholarship winner. She will be attending Indian Hills Community College to study dental hygiene.



Alexis Vos, a senior at Pella Christian High School, was the district’s winner. Vos will be attending Dordt University majoring in accounting.



Abigail Warner, a homeschool student in the PCEA territory, was this year’s scholarship winner. She will be attending the University of Iowa to study sports and recreation management.

Congratulations to our 2024 scholarship winners who are pictured below. We wish you the best in your futures!



Alexy Conover
Lynnville-Sully High School



Lydia Vos
Pella High School



Alexis Vos
Pella Christian High School



Kate Schneider
Knoxville High School



Hally Mull
Pleasantville High School



Abigail Warner
Homeschool Student

Save the Date for Member Appreciation Day!

Saturday, September 14



11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Pella Cooperative Electric
2615 Washington Street, Pella

Drive-Thru



Hamburgers and
hog dogs on us!

Giveaways!



Free giveaway per car!

Board Briefs

The PCEA Board of Directors met on May 30, 2024 for the May board meet at the PCEA office. The following were a few discussion topics:

- The Board of Directors reviewed the Cooperative's annual IUB inspection of facilities.
- The operations department reported on storage damage and outages during the storms of the month of May.
- The CEO reviewed the Marion County Housing Study where PCEA was a silver level sponsor. For more information on the study visit marioncountyiowa.com/news.

Lineman Assist in Recovery and Restoration Efforts at Consumers Energy

While our service territory was able to miss much of the severe weather on May 21, our neighboring cooperatives were not as fortunate.

As part of our principle of cooperation among cooperatives, we were proud to send Lead Lineman Matt Ainsworth and Lineman Apprentice Spencer Nagel to assist in the recovery and restoration of members at Consumers Energy and members in Story and Polk Counties. Cooperatives believe working together is the best strategy to empower our members and build a stronger cooperative economy.

Matt and Spencer - thank you for upholding this principle and helping our fellow REC members.



Happy Independence Day!

Our office will be closed Thursday July 4 to celebrate our country.