

# HIGHLINES

October 2020

A publication for members of Pella Cooperative Electric

## Power On: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, Pella Cooperative Electric's top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the members we serve. October is National Co-op Month, and electric co-ops across the country are speaking of the many ways we "Power On."

Who would have fathomed in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of the local community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, all have been challenged to operate differently, and PCEA has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors by adjusting how we do business.

PCEA has seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that's what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, everyone is pulling together. In 1936, PCEA was built by the community to serve the community, and that's what we'll continue to do – Power On.

## Did You Know?

- ▶ You are a member of PCEA, which means you're much more than just a customer! You have an actual membership with the co-op.
- ▶ Cooperatives work together. There are over 900 electric co-ops just like PCEA across America, and we all collaborate and help each other, which gives members high quality service.
- ▶ PCEA is not-for-profit, which means we are driven by service, not profits.
- ▶ PCEA returns its profits back to members in the form of capital credits.
- ▶ PCEA was formed by local farmers in 1936, and is still owned by members today.
- ▶ PCEA plays an important role in community development. Your co-op gives out scholarships, supports our local economic development through grants and loan funds, sponsors many community events, and much more.

Then. Now. Always.  
We're proud to power  
your life.  
October is National Co-op  
Month.

# #PowerOn



Pella Cooperative Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
The power of human connections



# Member Appreciation Drive-Thru BBQ a Hit

Everyone has had to make significant adjustments to their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has been no different for PCEA.

Every year the co-op hosts a Member Appreciation Day, and this year the co-op still wanted to celebrate. To keep everyone safe but still show appreciation to the membership, PCEA hosted a drive-thru BBQ on September 26 at the co-op's headquarters. Members pulled through the co-op's parking lot and picked up a meal and member gift. The co-op served over 600 people!

Thank you to our members for supporting the co-op and attending the event that allowed us to show our appreciation.



*PCEA Director Jon Van Woerkom hands over meals and a gift to a member.*



*Members line up around the co-op's headquarters to pick up their meal.*



*The Marion County Cattleman works on grilling locally sourced beef.*

**DAYLIGHT SAVING  
TIME REMINDER**  
Don't forget to fall  
back on **November 1!**  
Set your clocks back  
by one hour.



## Join Us at the Polls on November 3

As co-ops, the civic virtue of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community - one of the seven cooperative principles - through participation in our democracy. PCEA encourages all co-op members to participate in elections.



Make sure you are registered to vote prior to election day. Visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop) to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Election Day!

### Bright Idea



The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models. Plus, get some money off through a rebate from PCEA.

# Why Can't PCEA Staff Take My Payment Over the Phone?



In recent months, PCEA moved to an automated phone payment system. Today, cyber security and protecting our members' information is vital, so PCEA moved to this secure payment system to keep your information safe and comply with Payment Card Industry (PCI) rules. Unfortunately, hackers are out there and PCEA wants to ensure your credit card information is safe and secure. We understand the phone payment system takes more time and is not as easy, but there are other ways to pay that are easier, more convenient, and secure:

**SmartHub** – Download the co-op's free app to set up your debit or credit card in your online account. You can go into the app and pay each month, or set up your account to automatically pay your bill when it comes due. Easy, simple, and convenient. You simply need your account number to get started, which can be found on your bill.

**Online** – Create an online account through SmartHub's online portal, and manage your payments electronically. Easy, simple, and convenient. You simply need your account number to get started, which can be found on your bill. Or utilize PCEA's Pay Now system to simply plug in your account number, and make a secure payment.

**Auto Pay** – Set up your debit or credit card through SmartHub, or set up an automatic payment from your checking or savings account by filling out a form online at [www.pella-cea.org](http://www.pella-cea.org).

**DropBox or In Person** – Simply drop off your payment to us during office hours or anytime in our secure dropbox at the co-op's headquarters - 2615 Washington St., Pella.

## Make This Harvest a Safe One

Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. While harvest is a busy season on the farm, it's still important to take the time to keep safety first and look out for and stay safely away from potential hazards like overhead power lines. Here are some safety tips to help farmers make this harvest season a safe one.

- ✓ Look up and around you for overhead power lines. Always be aware of where they are in relation to your equipment.
- ✓ Keep a minimum of 10' away from all power lines.
- ✓ Don't forget to put your auger in when moving around power poles and lines.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for guy wires. Although these wires are not energized, they can bring down power lines.
- ✓ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- ✓ Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance under power lines.
- ✓ Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- ✓ If your machinery does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment and immediately call 911, and warn others to stay away.



# Sweet Savings Coming Your Way!

## Rate Changes Coming in December

Coming this December, rate changes will go into effect for all co-op members. Overall, members will see a 0.5% decrease and most residential members will see savings on their bill.

After a lengthy rate study and determination by the PCEA Board of Directors and staff, some rates and charges will increase while others will decrease, depending on the rate class.

Ensuring rates are fair and equitable across all rate classes is important to co-op members, because the revenue derived from the rates paid by the members for electric service is what funds the operation of the electric cooperative. The cooperative uses the philosophy that the cost causer should be the cost payer. Having multiple charges in each rate allows the cooperative to bill members as fairly and accurately as possible. As a not-for-profit cooperative, it is important for PCEA to periodically review rates and adjust as needed to cover expenses across the varying rate classes (residential, commercial, etc.).

Look for more information about changes to your electric rates in the mail and on our website at [www.pella-cea.org](http://www.pella-cea.org).



- PCEA closed on a USDA loan with Pella Regional Health Center on September 16.
- Rand Fischer will be present at the November board meeting to present the IADG Impact Award for USDA projects like Forward with Faith, Prairie City Medical Clinic, and Co-Line Manufacturing.
- Surveys to gauge interest about broadband were sent out; PCEA received 24% of the surveys back.

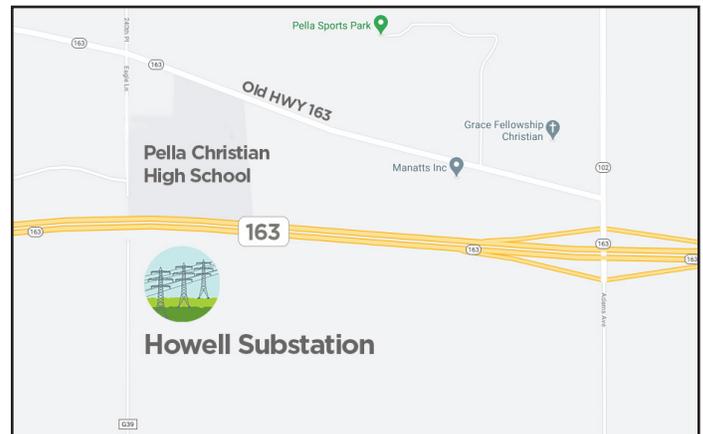
## New PCEA Substations in the Works

Two, new substations are in the works for 2020 and 2021.

Starting in the coming months, PCEA is working on relocating Howell Substation on Highway 163, just south of Pella Christian High School. The existing Howell Substation was originally constructed in 1981. PCEA decided to purchase land for a new location so the substation can be expanded and serve load growth.

Next year, PCEA will build Thunder Creek substation, which is located northeast of Pella. PCEA purchased the land from long-time member Betty Van Wyk.

Both substations will provide more load capacity to accommodate growth in our area, and will increase reliability of the electric grid.



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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. See [pella-cea.org](http://pella-cea.org) > Nondiscrimination Statement for more information.

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