

CLOSED Circuit


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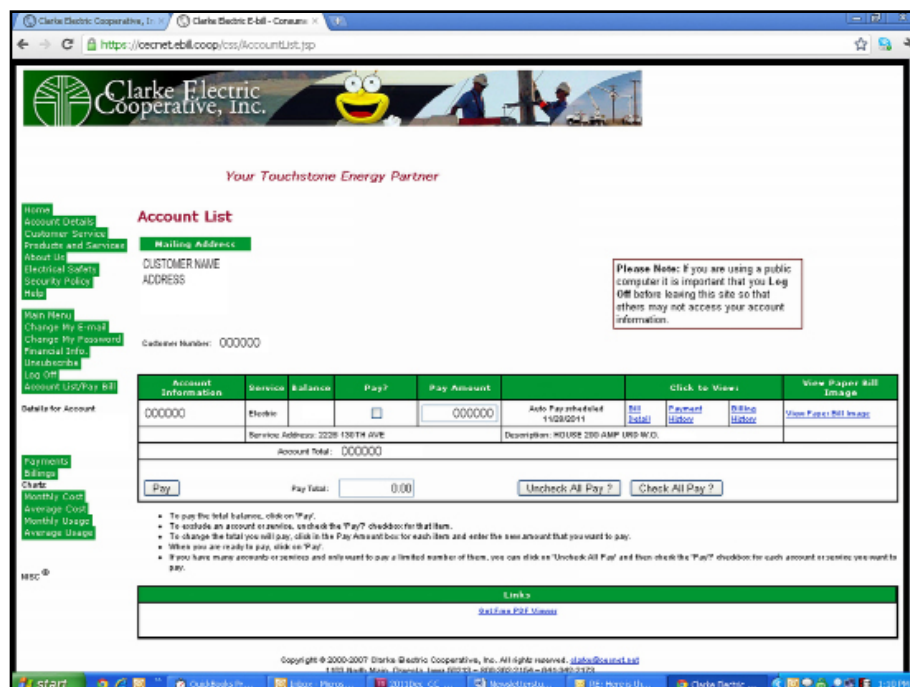
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Simplify Your Life With E-Bill

E-Bill is a free service that Clarke Electric Cooperative is proud to offer our members. It is an online resource that allows you to manage your electric account at your convenience, anytime, anywhere!

Some of the benefits include:

- 24/7 access to your account information
- View, print, or download your statement
- Automated e-mail notification indicating that your monthly statement is available
- Review your billing, payment, and usage history
- View your outage history
- Pay your bills on-line through a secure, encrypted server



Register today by visiting www.cecnet.net

Holiday Office Hours:



- ▶ **Christmas Holiday**
CEC offices will be closed on December 23 and 26.
- ▶ **New Year's Holiday**
CEC offices will be closed on January 2.
- ▶ **MLK Day**
CEC offices will be closed on January 16.

Local Business Upgrades CEC Infrastructure

As Clarke Electric Cooperative continues the Department of Energy technology installation, a member-owned small business is taking part. Terry and Danelle Taylor, owner-operators of Communications Solutions of Southern Iowa, are running fiber-optic cables from recloser boxes and regulators inside substations to communications shelters.

Each of CEC's eleven substations has a climate-controlled communications shelter to house the sensitive electronic equipment necessary for SCADA and automated distribution systems to function. Fiber-optic cables link the office and substation



Danelle Taylor runs fiber-optic cables at the Osceola substation to the communications shelter to enable remote control of some system switches.

Continued on page 4

Patronage Dividends = Your Investment

As a rural electric cooperative member, you're part-owner of a business. And since co-ops are nonprofit, they return margins to members through the patronage dividend process. The amount returned is in relation to the individual member's transactions with the co-op.

Patronage dividends are returned to co-op members on an average 20-year rotating schedule. Long-term members are most likely to receive a patronage dividend from the Cooperative, usually in the form of a credit on members' December electric bills.

In the past five years, your Cooperative has not returned patronage dividends four times, and the Board of Directors and management made a similar decision this year (except for paying out estates). The reason for this anomaly is the FEMA storm rebuilding process. Your Cooperative financed the cost of FEMA projects up front, which created a short-term problem that will ultimately be fixed once the reimbursements from FEMA have been collected. While this practice is unusual, it should not have a long-term impact on the Cooperative's future patronage dividend returns. The FEMA rebuilding was completed a few months ago. CEC is still waiting for FEMA payments for work completed in 2010 and 2011.



The FEMA rebuilds have helped your Cooperative replace or upgrade poles and wires that were damaged in the December 2007 ice storm. The ultimate goal is to have a more reliable and safe system to bring you the service you need, when you need it.

Key Issues on Agenda of Meeting

Four cooperatives hosted a Legislative Meeting in Creston on November 7. State Representatives Clel Baudler and Cecil Dolecheck joined Senator Joni Ernst and others to meet with about 50 attendees from the four cooperatives, including Clarke Electric (Osceola), Farmers Electric (Greenfield), and Guthrie Electric (Guthrie Center), and Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative (Corning, Stanton, and Mt. Ayr)

Legislative Meetings give cooperative leaders the opportunity to discuss the details of key issues with their area representatives. Lawmakers are most influenced by their voters and their expressed concerns. Whether you are a co-op member, director, manager, or employee, you play an important role in this process.

"If we don't tell them about our issues and concerns, they won't know we care," said CEC Manager Bill Freeman.

Your Cooperative's future can be directly related to your active participation in the political process. There is a great deal of power behind grassroots activities and their effective influence on the outcome of legislative, political, and community decisions. 41-24-11-00

"We are there to get the best deal for Iowa's RECs and you, our members," Freeman added. "You can help in this effort. We encourage all of you to participate in Iowa politics."

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FEDERAL TAX CREDITS for home energy efficiency improvements in 2011

If you made energy efficiency improvements to your existing home during 2011, you can apply for federal tax credits.

Eligible energy efficiency improvements for existing homes include:

- windows
- doors
- insulation
- roofs
- water heaters
- HVAC equipment

For details, visit:
www.energystar.gov/taxcredits



Representative Cecil Dolecheck (center) takes part in a lively discussion about issues that are important to cooperatives and their member-owners.

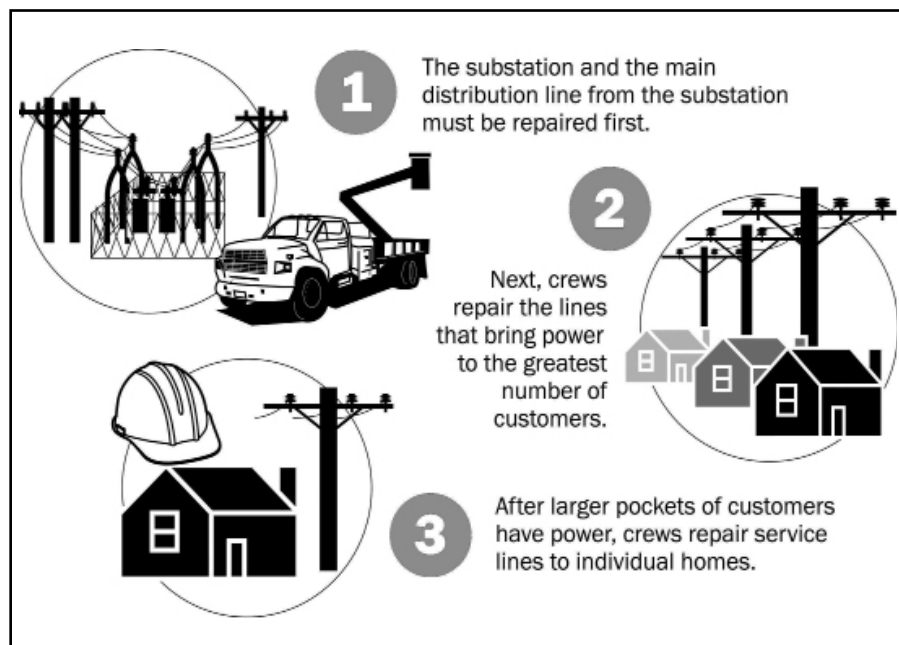
Prepare Now for Winter Storms



It's hard to predict the weather, but it's easy to prepare for it.

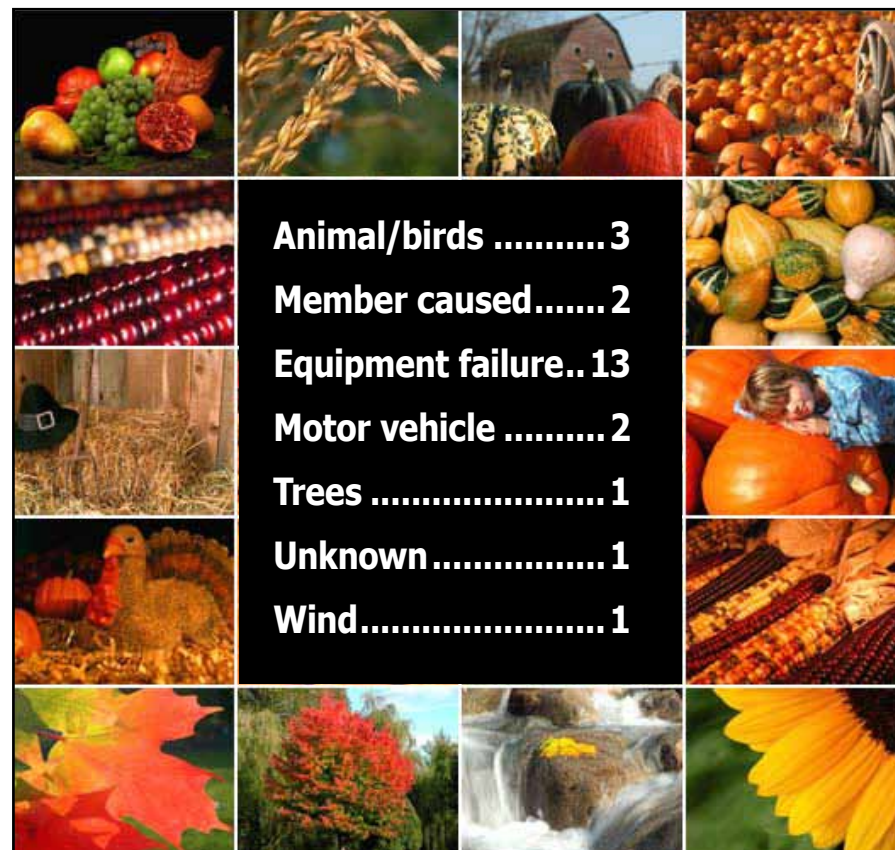
Here are some suggestions to help you plan ahead for unavoidable power outages that can accompany winter storms.

- Prepare an outage kit that contains: a battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flashlight, candles, matches, a wind-up clock, bottled water, and paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Keep a stock of canned food in your cupboard, along with a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only, please) if you can't cook on your electric stove.
- Tape Clarke Electric's outage report phone number on your refrigerator so it will be handy if you must report an outage: 1-800-362-2154.
- Pile a few extra blankets and sweaters together so you can find them easily if the heat goes off. Dress in layers to stay warm.



“Our hope is that the weather will spare us and we won't have any outages this winter. If we do, however, we'll restore service as quickly as possible,” said Clarke Electric Cooperative General Manager Bill Freeman. “Just in case, though, it's better to be prepared than to sit in the dark.”

Outages for October 2011



Change Filters Regularly

BY SPENDING A FEW MINUTES, I'M SAVING A LOT.

I'm saving \$82 a year by changing my home's air filter regularly. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

It's simple and only takes a couple of minutes. Change the air filter in your heating/cooling system every month can save you \$82 a year.

A dirty air filter makes your system work harder which wastes energy. A clean air filter helps to ensure efficient operation and keep your electricity bill in check. Without dust and dirt buildup, you can reduce the need for costly maintenance and prevent damage to your system. Experts recommend turning your system off before changing the air filter. Make sure that the arrow on the filter—which indicates the direction of the airflow—is pointing toward the blower motor. When you've made the change, turn your system back on.

Changing your filter every month can save you \$82 a year.

For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit Touchstone Energy's energy-saving Web-site or call the energy experts at Clarke Electric Cooperative. Find out how the little changes add up at www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Light up holiday savings with LEDs

Decorating with lights this holiday season? Consider light-emitting diodes (LEDs). They cost more initially but last twice as long as traditional lights, and you'll recover the difference in three to four years.

- **Efficient.** LEDs use between 1 kWh and 3 kWh of energy, compared to between 12 kWh and 105 kWh for traditional lights, saving \$11 every holiday season.
- **Durable.** LEDs last about 4,000 hours. They're also made of plastic and less likely to break.
- **Don't want to use LEDs?** Consider trimming back the number of hours your traditional lights are on to six hours or less each day.

Sources:
Consumer Reports,
Alliance to Save Energy



From the Employees and Board of Directors
at Clarke Electric Cooperative

We wish you a safe
and joyful holiday season



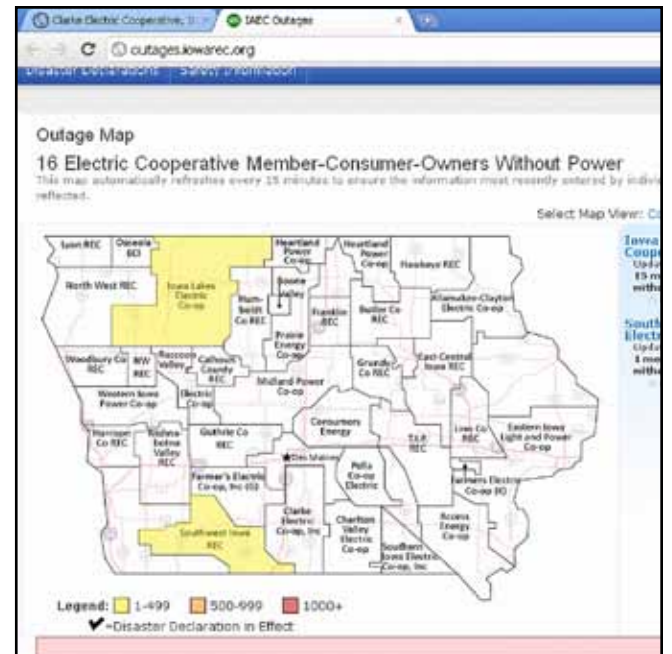
Check Outages on CEC Web-based Outage Map

Have you ever wondered what effect the latest storm has had on the access to electrical power across the state? 13-01-01-00

If you have access to a computer, a smart phone or an iPad you can:

- Log on to www.cecnet.net.
- Click on the outage map on top right of page.
- View the counties and the number of members affected by the storms.
- Log on to your personal account and look at your outage history for details about the outage.

This Web resource provides a statewide view of power outages at electric cooperatives that deliver electricity to approximately 650,000 Iowans in the state's 99 counties.



Local Business

Continued from page 1

communications together to operate pieces of the SCADA system and the distribution automation features so the Cooperative can control some of the system switches remotely.

Terry and Danelle Taylor have been in business since 1998 and work all over the state of Iowa. They specialize in voice, data and fiber-optic cabling, surveillance video, business phone systems, and multimedia for business offices, including cabling, screens, overhead projectors and sound systems, and access control electronic key fobs.



Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc., exists to professionally serve our members' changing needs, enhancing quality of life through leadership in community development and providing service excellence for our members' energy requirements.

P.O. Box 161, Osceola IA 50213 • 641-342-2173 • 1-800-362-2154

Our Web site: www.cecnet.net

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