



# CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative



**SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED** **Volume No. 81 No.2 | February 2021**

## Youth Tour Postponed to 2022

Due to the ongoing uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Iowa's electric cooperatives have made the decision not to participate in the 2021 National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour scheduled for June. The current plan is to return to offering the June trip to Washington, D.C., for deserving high school students in 2022.



## Energy Efficiency



### Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static. Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's air filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

## Looking Out for You: December Outages

- Unknown - 5
- Equipment/maintenance failure - 3
- Construction - 2
- Wind - 1
- Customer caused - 1



**CLARKE**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Safety Driven • Energy Smart • Community Invested  
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

P.O. Box 161 1103 N. Main  
Osceola, IA 50213-0161  
www.cecnet.net



## Energy Smart: 2021 Rebates

**INVESTING IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY** can sometimes cost a little more upfront but have big savings over time. Like many utilities, Clarke Electric wants to help you save money by maximizing the efficiency of your home, appliances and other electronics.

If it's time to replace your water heater, upgrade your old appliances, or increase the overall efficiency of your home heating and cooling systems, make sure to check out the incentives CEC offers and save!

For a full list of 2021 residential, agricultural and commercial rebates, visit our web site, [www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net) or call (641) 342-2173 with any questions.

### WATTS \$MART

Learn more about green living and energy-efficiency tips through WATTS \$MART, an electronic newsletter full of useful money-saving tips, including an energy use calculator. Contact Clarke Electric to start receiving WATTS \$MART each month in your inbox.

### MEMBER NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive our newsletter via email, just let us know. You can call or email us at [clarke@cecnet.net](mailto:clarke@cecnet.net). We will send it to your inbox at the beginning of each month.



## Meet Greg Kindred

**CEC WELCOMES NEW** employee Greg Kindred as the warehouseman. Greg and his wife Tina are lifelong residents of Clarke County. They have three grown daughters and one son, Casey, who is a senior at Clarke Community High School and lives at home.

Greg graduated from DMACC with a tool and die machinist diploma. He has more than 30 years in the manufacturing and industrial maintenance field, bringing a wealth of skills to his position at Clarke Electric.

In addition to his job with CEC, Greg farms, enjoys drag racing and four-wheeling in Colorado every summer. 39-02-02-02

Welcome Greg!

*Reading pays! We have hidden two of our members' account numbers in this issue. If you find your member location number, call during February to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.*

# 2020 By the Numbers

**N**OW THAT IT'S FEBRUARY, IT'S time to look back at the cooperative's accomplishments by reviewing our 2020 work plan. So many things were disrupted due to the pandemic, but your cooperative remained steadfastly committed to the maintenance and construction programs as well as the facility remodel outlined in our 2020 work plan.

Although we worked outside our normal parameters, we still found ways to complete the scheduled items and continue the progression of replacing old infrastructure to increase system reliability. Here's a look at what we accomplished in 2020.

## MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

### Overhead/Underground Line Inspection

We completed a systemwide overhead and underground reliability inspection, correcting deficiencies and installing animal protection, while documenting conductor size and fuse locations.

### Pole Testing

Our contractor, SBS Inspections, tested 2,145 poles in the Humeston substation area as part of its annual inspection. Only 72 poles were rejected – a figure that appears to be trending down, which is better than in past years. Fewer poles rejected means fewer poles replaced, reducing the time and cost to change out poles. 62-06-01-00

### OCR TESTING PROGRAM

We focused on changing oil circuit reclosers (OCRs) in the Humeston and Clio substation areas and corrected coordination issues identified in the engineering study.

### SUBSTATION UPGRADES

This year an aggressive effort was made in three of our substations to increase our system capacity while improving reliability. Often is the case that capacity and reliability are related as an increase in capacity affords our linemen the ability to switch load between substations during outage restoration efforts or avoid outages during the routine maintenance of the system.

**Osceola** - The substation transformer was

upgraded, increasing the capacity of the substation by 50%. This will allow for future growth and contingency switching. Animal and bird guards, known as substation cover-up, were applied while the substation was out of service to reduce the number of outages caused by critters. Upgrades were made to the voltage regulator controllers to allow for safer and more efficient future maintenance.

**Derby** – The substation transformer was replaced with a larger unit that was previously in service at the Osceola substation, increasing the capacity of the substation by 33%. This additional capacity will support load growth and allow for contingency switching. The voltage regulators were also replaced with new and larger units to match the capacity of the substation transformer. Substation cover-up was applied while the substation was out of service.

**Humeston** – The substation transformer was replaced with a larger unit that was previously in service at the Derby substation, increasing the capacity of the substation by 50%. Additionally, the voltage regulators were replaced with larger units to match the capacity of the substation and allow for future growth. The transformers retired from this substation were 47 years old.

## LINE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

**Osceola Northeast Circuit Re-Phase** – We completed 0.25 miles of conversion from single-phase to two-phase to allow for load balancing on the Osceola Northeast circuit.

**Underground Distribution (URD) Wire Replacement** - An effort was made to identify circuits and lines that have been problematic in failures causing outages. Starting with the most outage minutes and affected customers, we systematically started replacing aged open concentric underground cable. Four lines with the highest URD outage minutes were replaced and appear to have made a significant impact.

**Osceola South Circuit Voltage Regulators** – We constructed a three-phase voltage

regulator bank on the tie line between the Osceola South and the I-35 South circuits. This is one of two sets of voltage regulators that are necessary to pick-up the Osceola South circuit from the I-35 South circuit pending the proposed load increase.

As we review our performance for the year, we compare cooperative figures to our budget as well as actual numbers in order to improve our budgeting skills and our ability to project sales, revenue and expense. We use actual numbers on a five-year average and a proforma from the current year to project the budget. Budgeting is an essential part of our business plan and helps the cooperative to allocate the dollars needed to fund future projects and plan for annual construction and maintenance projects.

## CONSTRUCTION

Operationally, we can show the stats for the past five years to get a better idea of how we compare to ourselves from year to year.

Some of the highlights for 2020 include:

- 53 new homes
- 37 other new services
- 47 system improvements
- 20-meter loops updated
- 45 leased lights installed



**DAVE OPIE**  
General Manager

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
New services	90	80	91	81	68
Retired services	30	38	21	19	42

As we compare our budget to our actual income and expense statements, we see that we ended the year very close to the projected budget. Expenses were 3% under budget and revenue was less than 1%

*continued on pg. 3*



# Numbers...continued from pg. 2

higher than budget. Kilowatt hour sales for 2020 were down 3% from 2019. Weather is the number one driver of sales. Mild weather generally equates to less heating and cooling, the two largest drivers of energy usage in residential homes.

kWh SALES	
2020	109,433,000
2019	112,975,000
2018	112,649,000
2017	101,019,000
2016	98,281,000

## FACILITY REMODEL PLAN

The cooperative moved ahead with the facility remodel plan as planned. Construction began in early 2020 and is projected to be complete in May of 2021. While this brought even more upheaval



Trenches were dug in preparation for new utility lines.



The new steel frame structure for truck and equipment storage is up. The next step is to get the structure enclosed.

to an already unusual year, the employees of the cooperative met the challenges with perseverance and resilience. Our goal continues to be delivering power to your homes and businesses in a safe and reliable manner with as few interruptions as possible. For updates, follow the cooperative on Facebook, facebook.com/CEClowa.

## COMMUNICATIONS WITH CEC

When the pandemic hit, the cooperative felt it was important to be able to communicate with our members in a forum they could easily access.

We currently provide our monthly newsletter inserted with your bill. If you receive your bill electronically and want to continue to

receive the newsletter, email us at [clarke@cecnet.net](mailto:clarke@cecnet.net) to request electronic delivery. In addition to our newsletter, we went live with our Facebook page in March as a way for us to connect real time with our members with important information about the cooperative. In December 2020, we went live with a new website, [www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net).

We hope you find our communications platforms useful and informative. We work for you our members and that is what makes us unique. It is the cooperative business model! Thank you for your continued support.

## Annual Notice of Complaints

**C**LARKE ELECTRIC STRIVES TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE best service at the lowest possible cost. But sometimes you may have questions regarding your electrical service or billing, or possibly a complaint. If you have a complaint you can reach a representative by contacting us or by writing to:

**Member Advocate**  
**Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
 1103 N. Main St.  
 Osceola, IA 50213

You may also call us at (641) 342-2173 or toll-free at (800) 362-2154.

If you have a complaint related to Clarke Electric's service rather than its rates, and your complaint is not resolved, you may ask for assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling (515)725-7321 or toll free (877) 565-4450, by writing to 1375 E. Court Ave., Room 69; Des Moines, IA 50319-0069, or by email to [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).

**Stay Comfortable.**

Space heating and cooling account for a large portion of the average home's energy use. A programmable or smart thermostat can help you control the temperature of your home and save energy.

Photo credit: Consumers Energy

## + Safety Driven: Space Heaters

feeling chilled?  
**HEAT YOUR HOME SAFELY**

- 1 Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away
- 2 Place on a flat, level surface
- 3 Make sure the cord is not frayed or cracked
- 4 Plug it directly into an outlet
- 5 Follow all instructions and use models endorsed by a reputable testing lab
- 6 Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which can overheat
- 7 Do not use around small children or pets
- 8 Do not use one with a damaged plug or prongs

## Annual Statement of Nondiscrimination

**CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.** is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is David A. Opie, general manager of Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and /or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Stop 1510, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-1510; or the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.



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David Opie, General Manager  
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