

# WATTS Current

March 2019

For Our Members

## Plans for Iowa's Largest Solar Project Announced by Central Iowa Power Cooperative

Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) announced plans to partner with Clēnera LLC to develop the largest solar project in Iowa, and one of the largest in the Midwest. CIPCO will purchase 100 percent of the energy and capacity output for 25 years from Wapello Solar, a 100-megawatt solar facility to be located on approximately 800 acres in Louisa County. MVEC is a member cooperative of CIPCO.

The project will incorporate the latest in solar array technology to provide cost-effective, clean electric energy. Cutting-edge solar panel technology will be paired with efficient solar inverters and a single-axis tracking system to maximize energy generation. Clēnera, based in Boise, ID, will develop and operate Wapello Solar with the facility retaining all associated renewable energy credits. The completion date for Wapello Solar is expected to be December of 2020.

“We are thrilled to partner with Clēnera to bring low-cost, clean energy to our members,” said CIPCO CEO and Executive Vice President Bill Cherrier.

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**Watts Current by Email**  
 If you would prefer to have the Watts Current emailed to you, please sign up by sending an email to [erobertson@mvec.coop](mailto:erobertson@mvec.coop)



Keep your work area dry when working with anything electric. Remember, water + electricity = danger.

**Safety MATTERS**

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**MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHTS**

April 16  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Legionnaire Ballroom  
Oxford Junction, IA

April 23  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Ryan Gym  
Ryan, IA

**FOOD! FAMILY! FUN!**

**BUCKET RIDES (WEATHER PERMITTING)**



**ARCADE GAMES**



**FACE PAINTING**



**BALLOON SCULPTING**





## Plans for Iowa's Largest Solar Project Announced by Central Iowa Power Cooperative

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“This is a milestone project as we look to strike a meaningful balance with energy cost, reliability and stewardship for our members. Energy produced by the sun provides an excellent complement to wind energy. Energy from Wapello Solar will be produced during our daily and seasonal peak demand times. This is an innovative way for us to offer reliability and efficiency to CIPCO’s energy portfolio.”

The Wapello Solar project meets Clēnera’s mission of adding solar energy to the grid, according to co-founder and CEO Jason Ellsworth.

“Together with our suppliers and technology partners we’ve reduced costs and now see interest in projects extending to places that before now did not expect to see competitive prices from solar projects,” Ellsworth said. “Today’s solar technology allows us to be better stewards of our natural resources and at the same time create jobs.

This is the second major generation project announced in as many months by CIPCO, as the

cooperative recently announced a 60-megawatt project to repower the Summit Lake Generating Station in Creston. The project includes demolition of its 70-year old steam plant and installation of efficient natural gas-fired reciprocating engines by late 2022.

In addition, the Heartland Divide Wind Energy Center is expected to come online at the end of this month. CIPCO is purchasing 100 percent of the energy produced by the 103.5 megawatt Heartland Divide facility, making it CIPCO’s largest wind energy project to date. These announcements come on the heels of actions this summer by NextEra Energy Resources and Alliant Energy who petitioned the IUB to close the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) in Palo in 2020, 14 years before the plant’s operating license would expire. CIPCO is 20 percent owner of the nuclear plant and receives 20 percent of its generating capacity from DAEC.

“We’re pleased to add these cost-effective energy projects to our portfolio,” said Cherrier. “Our members and their member-consumers benefit from advantageous pricing on these next generation resources. Not only do members insist on cost efficiencies, they also demand reliability. It’s exciting to provide both through complementary generation projects powered by the wind and the sun.”

**Central Iowa Power Cooperative**  
CIPCO is a generation and transmission electric cooperative (of which MVEC is a member) built by member cooperatives and the communities they serve. With a balanced, 24/7 energy portfolio, CIPCO is committed to providing cost-effective, clean, safe, and reliable energy. CIPCO and its 13 members serve over 300,000 Iowans in 58 Iowa counties. CIPCO’s offices are located in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Creston, and Wilton, Iowa. For more information visit [www.cipco.net](http://www.cipco.net).

## WE’VE GOT YOUR NUMBER

### PHONE SERVICE FROM MVLINK

You already enjoy the gold standard in internet—why not enjoy phone service as well? With a home phone line, you’ll enjoy the reliability of a phone that’s not subject to cellular signals. Also, a home phone line gives you one number for your entire family, all at a low price of \$34.95 for unlimited local and long distance.

CONTACT US TODAY!

MVLINK.COOP | 800-927-6068  
OR EMAIL [FIBER@MVEC.COOP](mailto:FIBER@MVEC.COOP)

\*Some restrictions apply. Phone services limited to lower 48 states or Continental US.





## Three Easy DIY Projects to Save Energy

Winter weather can have a big impact on your energy bills, hitting your pockets a little harder than you would have liked. Now that spring is just around the corner, it's the perfect time to tackle a few DIY efficiency projects for your home. The good news: You don't have to be an energy expert to do this!

There are several easy ways to save energy, but if you're willing to take a hands-on approach, here are three projects you can do now to start saving.

### Make the Most of Your Water Heater

Let's start with one of the easiest projects: insulating your water heater. Insulating a water heater that's warm to the touch can save 7 to 16 percent annually on your water heating bills. It should also be noted that if your water heater is new, it is likely already insulated. But if your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation.

You can purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket for about \$20. You'll also need two people for this project. Before you start, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. If necessary, use a marker to note the areas where the controls are so you can cut them out. Once the blanket is positioned correctly tape it permanently in place, then turn the water heater back on. If you have an electric water heater, do not set the thermostat above 130 degrees, which can cause overheating.

### Seal Air Leaks with Caulk

The average American family spends \$2,000 annually on energy bills, but unfortunately, much of that money is wasted through air leaks in the home. Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. There are many different types of caulking compounds available, but



Photo Credit: Rare Form Properties

the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible and won't shrink or crack.

Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint with a putty knife, screwdriver, brush or solvent. The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk.

Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Afterwards, use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

### Weather Strip Exterior Doors

One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Weather stripping materials vary, but you can ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need.



Photo Source: Pixabay.com

When choosing weather stripping materials, make sure it can withstand temperature changes, friction and the general "wear and tear" for the location of the door. Keep in mind, you will need separate materials for the door sweep (at the bottom of the door) and the top and sides.

Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the moulding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Measure each side of the door, then cut the weather stripping to fit each section. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

By completing these simple efficiency projects, you can save energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home. And you can impress your family and friends with your savvy energy-saving skills.



## Annual Contractor Conference Promotes Energy Efficiency

Iowa’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives celebrated the 27th annual “Momentum Is Building” conference February 7–8 in Des Moines.

Since the conference began in 1993, its mission has been to provide a forum for energy efficiency and electric technology education. The conference seeks to build relationships with trade professionals who influence electric cooperative members’ decision-making about home building/remodeling, heating, cooling, water heating and energy efficiency.

Momentum Is Building continues to offer up-to-date building science information, practical hands-on details and new technology displays for building trades professionals – including homebuilders, electricians, and heating-plumbing contractors. Rural electric cooperative personnel from across Iowa join their local contractors at the conference.

“For many years, Momentum Is Building has allowed building trades professionals from our area to find out what’s new in the industry—techniques as well as products, so they can better serve consumers in our community. Attendees also obtain continuing education credits they need to stay current in their professions and understand recent code changes,” said Al Schilling, MVEC Member Advocate.



*Electric cooperative personnel, homebuilders, electricians, and heating-plumbing contractors learned about what’s new in the industry so they can better serve their communities.*

Nationally recognized speakers shared their knowledge on topics including ways to improve building and remodeling through HERS ratings, energy modeling and more; the latest in solar; smart home products; and solving the housing crisis in rural Iowa. CEU sessions for electricians and heating-plumbing professionals included cold climate air source heat pumps, common electrical code violations, and more. Momentum Is Building also includes a trade show where participants visit with companies to learn about new products.

Support for the conference comes from Iowa’s rural electric cooperatives.

## Outstanding Patronage Dividend Checks

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, 109 North Huber Street, Anamosa, Iowa 52205, has abandoned property that results from patronage dividend checks issued from 2016 for the cooperative members listed below. If this property is not claimed within three years from the original check date, it will be forfeited to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative according to Iowa law. For a complete listing of all members with abandoned property, please visit our website at: [www.mvec.coop/about-us/member-owner](http://www.mvec.coop/about-us/member-owner).

- |                          |                          |                            |                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Leroy Altergott          | Eric V. Groff            | Joyce Lyon                 | Irene Smith          |
| Michele Amthauer         | Conrad J. Grundmeyer     | Luther Marquette           | Nicholas L. Steffens |
| Jeffery A. Bell          | Robert Hartsock          | Dan Meyer                  | Joe Thoma            |
| Leo Bockenstedt Pork LLC | Christy/William Havens   | Harold G./Bernadine Nieman | David E. Toulouse    |
| Mary Connolly            | Frederick/Cathryn Hedley | Mrs. Emmet J. Piper        | Tina Voseberg        |
| Irwin Edward             | Kevin J. Heims           | Loyd Poppe                 | Doris Wessel         |
| Vivian Fettkether        | Ronald H. Hon            | James A. Porter            | Adelaide A. West     |
| Justin Finn              | Lester Jones             | Carl J./Janine Rauscher    | Steven/Rebecca Wolf  |
| Charles A. Gassman       | John V./Julie Kraus      | Paul Schwager              | Phillip S. Zimmerman |
| Gene J. Goetzinger       | Barbara Ludwig           |                            |                      |



## National Ag Day

March 14, 2019 is National Ag Day, a time when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies,



and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by American agriculture.

As the world population soars, there is even greater demand for the food, fiber, and renewable resources produced in the United States.

The National Ag Day program believes that every American should:

- Understand how food, fiber, and renewable resource products are produced.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant, and affordable products.
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, fiber, and renewable resource industries.

Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use, and wear on a daily basis, and is increasingly contributing to fuel and other bio-products. Each year, members of the agricultural industry gather together to promote American agriculture. This effort helps educate millions of consumers.

By far, the most effective part of this program is the role you play in helping spread the word. A few generations ago, most Americans were directly involved in – or had relatives or friends involved in – agricultural-related endeavors. Today, that is no longer the case. That is why it is so important that we join together at the community level...our voices, in concert, become a shout that carries our message a great deal further than any one of us can do alone!

## Pull the Plug

Do you have old appliances no longer in use and taking up space? The Pull the Plug program pays you for saving energy responsibly. Sign up today by calling our recycling contractor, CLEAResult, at 855-838-7817 (toll-free). Please have your account number handy as you will be asked to provide it. Appliances in **working condition (runs and cools)** will qualify for the following rewards:



Refrigerator: \$35 Freezer: \$25 Window AC: \$25  
(Limited to three appliances per year.)

# Can You Dig It?

An underground utility line is **damaged once every 9 minutes** because someone didn't call 811.

Call 811, the "Call Before You Dig Number," at least **2 business days** prior to digging.

811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.

Even if you have previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it's best to call before starting a new project.

Once **all of your utilities** have been located, then you can start your digging project!

Learn more at



# Would Your Home Pass an Electrical Inspection?

## Home Electrical Inspection:

### Pass or Fail?

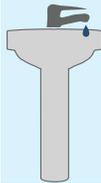
Would your home pass an electrical inspection? Local electrical codes vary, so check with your qualified electrician, but here are **five things your home should have**:



Wiring should be sound (not overcrowded or knob-and-tube wiring used in old homes).



Ceiling fixtures should be controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain.

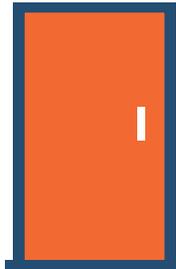


Outlets near water should have GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters).



Your refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal should each have its own circuit.

Your island should have its own outlet.



If you're getting ready to sell your home or just wondering how electrically sound it is, there are some general guidelines out there to assess the condition of your home's wiring and electrical bones. Although it varies depending on where you live, most local codes follow the National Electric Code (NEC).

The NEC is an industry-specific, jargon-filled document that outlines required practices for all aspects of residential and commercial electrical installation. Don't worry, you don't have to google it and read it from cover to cover, but know that your local code could vary. Local code always wins out when there are variances, so be sure to check with your qualified electrician or local building department (start with your city or town) for specific code requirements.

Electrical malfunction is dangerous. U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 45,210 reported U.S. home structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction per year from 2010 to 2014, according to the National Fire Protection Agency. The home fires resulted in 420 deaths, 1,370 injuries and an annual \$1.4 billion in direct property damage.

In general, here are some all-house guidelines that an inspector would look for; remember they may or may not align with your local electrical code but they are NEC-mandated. If your home has any of the following defects, it may not pass an electrical safety inspection:

- Old knob-and-tube, along with BX cable wiring, common in the U.S. from about 1880 to 1930
- New lights and receptacles installed into old wiring
- Overcrowded wires; i.e. too many wires bundled together producing excess heat
- Spliced wires that were illegally installed (they must be installed by an approved method)

Learn more at





- Broken or missing carbon monoxide detectors or smoke alarms (whether smoke alarms must be hard wired depends on the age of the home and in most cases, whether any home improvement projects required a permit)
- Non-insulated/non-contact-rated recessed lights that touch attic insulation, which is a fire hazard
- Improper overcurrent protection, which means the breaker or fuse is too large for the wire rating
- Improper Grounding and Bonding of electrical panels and devices

Some other room-specific things to look for include:

**Kitchen**

- Does your electric range, cooktop or oven have a dedicated 240-volt circuit?
- Is the breaker for the range, cooktop or oven sized correctly?
- Does your island have its own outlet? (The NEC has outlet requirements for kitchen islands, peninsulas and countertops.)
- Does your microwave, refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal each have its own circuit?

**Bathroom**

- Are outlets GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupters)? GFCIs are designed to protect people from electric shock around water.
- Do your combination fan/lights have their own 20-amp circuit?
- Do the light fixtures in the shower or tub area have a “lens” cover? Are they moisture resistant?

**Other Rooms (living, dining, family, bedrooms)**

- Does each room have a wall switch installed beside the entry door?
- Are outlets installed no farther than 12 feet apart?
- Are ceiling fixtures controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain?

There are also hallway, staircase and garage code requirements, as well as those for the electrical service panel and wiring. Check with your qualified electrician or the city or town where you live for specific code requirements in all areas of your home.

**Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI)**

Many prominent electrical and homebuilding experts believe that using arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) in these areas of homes has a significant impact on homeowner safety and that they reduce the number of lives lost in home electrical fires.

An AFCI is designed to detect series faults, line to neutral faults and line to ground faults, effectively stopping a fire before it starts.

For more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# Watts The Answer?

1. One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior \_\_\_\_\_, which can keep out drafts and help your control energy costs.

2. An underground utility line is damaged once every \_\_\_\_ minutes because someone didn't call \_\_\_\_\_.

3. An \_\_\_\_\_ is designed to detect series faults, line to neutral faults and line to ground faults, effectively stopping a fire a before it starts.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to [erobertson@mvec.coop](mailto:erobertson@mvec.coop).

Two winners will each receive a \$10.00 credit on their energy bills.

Please complete the following:

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

January winners:

Sally Hinrichsen, Monticello

Richard Ludwig, Dyersville

