



Linn County
Rural Electric
Cooperative

ElectricConnection

A monthly publication for our members



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JANUARY 2025



Do you have a high school senior who will graduate this May? Linn County REC is offering multiple scholarships specifically for high school seniors planning to attend a college, university, or vocational/technical school in Iowa this fall (2025).

Applicants are evaluated on various criteria, not solely academic performance. You can find the scholarship application and the rules and instructions online at www.linncountyrec.com. The application deadline is March 3, 2025. Scholarship recipients will be notified by mail and announced on our website April 1, 2025.

The following scholarships are available:

Bachelor's Degree Scholarship

- Six \$2,000 scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors enrolling full-time in an bachelor's degree (undergraduate) program at an accredited college or university in Iowa.

Associate's Degree Scholarship

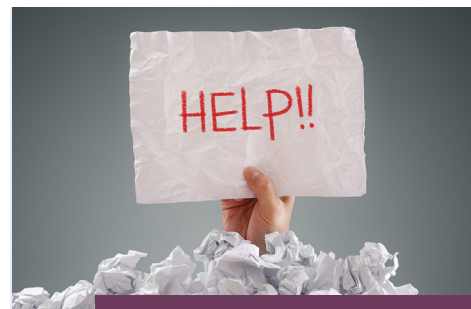
- Two \$1,000 scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors enrolling full-time in an associate's degree program at an accredited two-year vocational or technical school in Iowa.

Allen Feickert Memorial Scholarship (Powerline Program)



This scholarship provides an incredible opportunity for those entering the powerline field. Two \$2,000 scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors in Iowa who are entering the Powerline Diploma Program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, Iowa.

As a part of our commitment to the communities we serve, Linn County REC has awarded college scholarships since 1995 to graduating high school seniors living in a home served by Linn County REC.



Start Off the New Year Paperless!

Switching to paperless billing is simple and offers numerous benefits. By going digital, you can reduce paper waste, helping the environment.

Paperless billing also provides greater convenience—no more waiting for bills to arrive in the mail or searching through stacks of paper. You'll receive instant notifications, have easy access to your statements anytime, and enjoy faster payment processing.

Plus, managing your bills online allows for better organization, helping you track payments and stay on top of your finances effortlessly. Make the move today for a greener, more efficient way to handle your billing!

Sign-up is easy through SmartHub:

1. Log on to your SmartHub account
2. Go to Settings (left navigation bar)
3. Click Paperless Billing
4. Switch Go Paperless toggle to ON
5. Click Yes on the paperless settings pop-up

Don't have SmartHub? Create an account on our website to take advantage of SmartHub's benefits.

Official Complaint Notice

Any complaint that you, as a member of Linn County REC, may have against the cooperative will be answered by contacting us during normal business hours (7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) by calling 319-377-1587 or toll free at 1-800-332-5420, in person at 5695 REC Drive, Marion, IA., or by writing to Linn County REC, P.O. Box 69, Marion, IA., 52302-0069. You may also email us at lcrc@linncountyrec.com.

If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety or engineering standards, or renewable energy and Linn County REC does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling (515) 725-7321, or toll-free 1-877-565-4450, by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069, or by email to customer@iub.iowa.gov.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Linn County REC receives funding from the USDA and is required to provide notice of the following:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

2025 Residential and Small Commercial Rebates

Check out our new and updated rebates for 2025. Visit our website for more information, eligibility requirements, and terms and conditions. Make sure to submit your applications within 90 days of your installation/invoice date to take advantage of these savings.

ENERGY STAR Ground-Source Heat Pump

- Closed Loop System (new) \$450/ton
- Hybrid Closed Loop System (new w/gas backup) \$550/ton
- Replacement Unit \$100/ton
- Desuperheater (new installs only) \$150/unit

ENERGY STAR Air-Source Heat Pump

- All Electric Air-Source Heat Pump \$300/ton
- Hybrid Air-Source Heat Pump (w/gas backup) \$400/ton

NEEP Listed Cold Climate Air-Source Heat Pump

- All Electric Air-Source Heat Pump \$500/ton
- Hybrid Air-Source Heat Pump (w/gas backup) \$600/ton

Supplemental Mini-Split Heat Pump

- ENERGY STAR or NEEP Listed Cold Climate \$200/ton

HVI Certified Indoor Air Quality

Energy or Heat Recovery Ventilation \$300/unit

Hybrid Heat Pump Water Heater \$600/unit

- Go Electric Bonus (switching from natural gas or propane) \$100

Level II EV Charger \$175

Appliances

- Heat Pump Dryer \$150
- Induction Cooktop Stove \$75

Smart Plugs up to \$10 per plug

Timers

- Water Heater Timer up to \$50
- Pool Pump Timer up to \$50

New Home Construction

- B.E. Smart Home Bonus \$2000/home
- Parade of Homes Marketing Incentive \$1000/home



Uncover Energy Savings In The New Year With A DIY Energy Audit

A home energy audit may sound daunting, but it can be as easy as following our checklist of improvements based on what you see around your home. Go to the energy solutions tab at www.linncountyrec.com to download our checklist and get started.

- First, check the heating and cooling equipment. Determine the age and efficiency of the equipment by looking up the model number on the nameplate. The average lifespan of HVAC equipment is 15 to 20 years, depending on the type of equipment and how well it's maintained. If your equipment is older, it may be time to budget for an upgrade. Check the filter and replace it if needed.
- Then, check your home's envelope, which separates the heated or cooled areas from the exterior, for drafts and air leakage. Feel around windows and trim for any drafts. Pay special attention to spots where different building materials come together. Check under sinks for gaps around pipes. Seal with weatherstripping, caulk, or expanding foam as needed.
- Make sure to replace incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with LEDs. LEDs use significantly less energy and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.
- Most manufacturers recommend flushing the water heater once a year as part of routine maintenance. This helps remove sediment build-up and prevent corrosion, which decreases efficiency. If you want to save on hot water usage, check faucet aerators and shower heads for their gallon-per-minute ratings (GPM); the lower GPM, the more your savings will be. The average water heater lasts 13 years in Iowa, if your water heater is older, it may be time to start budgeting for a new one.
- Also, check the temperature of your water by running it for three minutes at the faucet closest to your water heater. Then, fill a cup and measure it with a cooking thermometer. Hot water should be between 120 and 140 degrees. You can reduce the temperature of your water heater to reduce energy waste and prevent scalding.
- Next, look in the attic while wearing a dust mask to make sure it's insulated. You may be able to see enough from the access area using a cellphone with the flash on to take pictures. Use the tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be a minimum of 12 inches deep. This can vary depending on the type of insulation used. Insulation can become compacted over time. It should be evenly distributed throughout the attic. Loose fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy and evenly dispersed. Rolled batt insulation should fit tightly together without gaps.
- Also, exterior walls should be insulated. If your home is older than the 1960s, the walls are probably not insulated. Homes from the 1960s or 1970s likely need more insulation. Sometimes you can see wall insulation by removing an outlet cover or switch plate and using a flashlight to look for insulation inside the wall cavity. Turn off the power at the electrical panel to avoid the risk of electric shock. Wall insulation can be blown in from the inside or the outside of the home. This is a job for a professional.
- If you have a basement or crawlspace, head there next. Unfinished basements should have insulation on the rim joists, at minimum. This is the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the home's first-story floor. Use closed-cell spray foam or a combination of rigid foam and spray foam to insulate rim joists. Crawl spaces should have insulation on the underside of the floor between the floor joists. Insulation should be properly supported in contact with the floor with no air gaps. Water pipes and ductwork should also be insulated.



Once your home energy audit is finished, review your findings and start prioritizing home energy efficiency projects. Get even more savings by taking advantage of our energy efficiency rebates and federal tax credits. For more information, go to www.linncountyrec.com.

Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient For My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. Unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating bills.

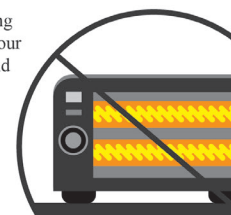
Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut



TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

Safety

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model with the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Alternatives to space heaters

Consider alternative ways to stay warm such as extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation and maintain warmth.

For more information

We know it's cold out there, but remember, in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly. If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, visit our energy solutions page on our website or contact our Member Services department.



Slow Cooker Spaghetti & Meatball Soup

- 1 (20-oz) package frozen meatballs
- 1 (24 to 26-oz) jar of spaghetti sauce
- 4 cups beef broth
- 3 cups water
- 1 tsp dried basil
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 8- oz angel hair pasta, broken into 1-½ inch pieces

Place frozen meatballs, spaghetti sauce, beef broth, water, basil, and parmesan cheese in slow cooker. Cover and cook on **LOW** for 6-8 hours. Stir in uncooked pasta. Cook on **HIGH** for 15-20 minutes, until pasta is tender. Serve with additional parmesan cheese, if desired.

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