



Linn County
Rural Electric
Cooperative

ElectricConnection

A monthly publication for our members



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JANUARY 2024



Apply For Our In State College Scholarships

Do you have a high school senior graduating in May? Linn County REC is awarding multiple scholarships to high school seniors attending a college/university or vocational/technical school in Iowa in the fall of 2024.

Applicants are graded in numerous categories and not exclusively on scholastic effort. Applications with rules and instructions are available online at www.linncountyrec.com. **The application deadline is March 1, 2024.** Scholarship recipients will be notified by mail and posted on our website on April 1, 2024.

The following scholarships are now available:

Four Year Degree

- Scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors entering a full-time undergraduate course at an accredited college or university in Iowa.

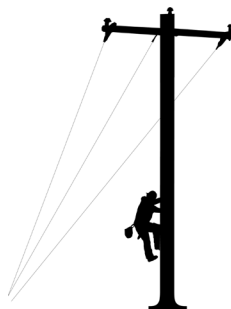
Two Year Degree

- Scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors entering a full-time associate's degree at an accredited two-year vocational/technical school in Iowa.

Lineman Scholarship

The Allen Feickert Memorial Scholarship for **any graduating high school senior in Iowa** who is entering the Powerline Diploma Program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, Iowa.

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



Keeping a resolution to be more energy efficient in 2024 is easy with these tips:

- **Switch to LED.** Replace incandescent bulbs with LEDs. They use 70 - 90% less energy and last much longer.
- **Plug energy leaks.** Install weatherstripping around doors and windows. Check for and seal air leaks in the attic, basement, and around plumbing and wiring access points.
- **Adjust temperatures.** Properly adjust the thermostat when your home is unoccupied to avoid heating or cooling an empty house. A programmable thermostat adds convenience and optimizes savings.
- **Heat and cool naturally.** Take advantage of natural sunlight and window shades to provide no-cost heating and cooling.
- **Power down.** Turn off or unplug computers, battery chargers, or other electronic equipment when not used.



Tree Trimming Improves Service For All

Our vegetation management program aims to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Our proactive approach benefits co-op members in three ways:

Safety

We put safety above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, trees touching power lines in our members' yards can pose a grave danger to families. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during storms, making it more dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

Reliability

One of the most significant benefits is reliability. Strategic tree trimming keeps lines clear and reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages.

Affordability

As a not-for-profit cooperative, we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Through vegetation management, we can better keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events, and secure the grid's reliability.

Service Equipment Ownership - Who Owns What

If a storm damages electrical equipment on your property, you may have questions about which parts of the service are yours and which parts Linn County REC owns/maintains.

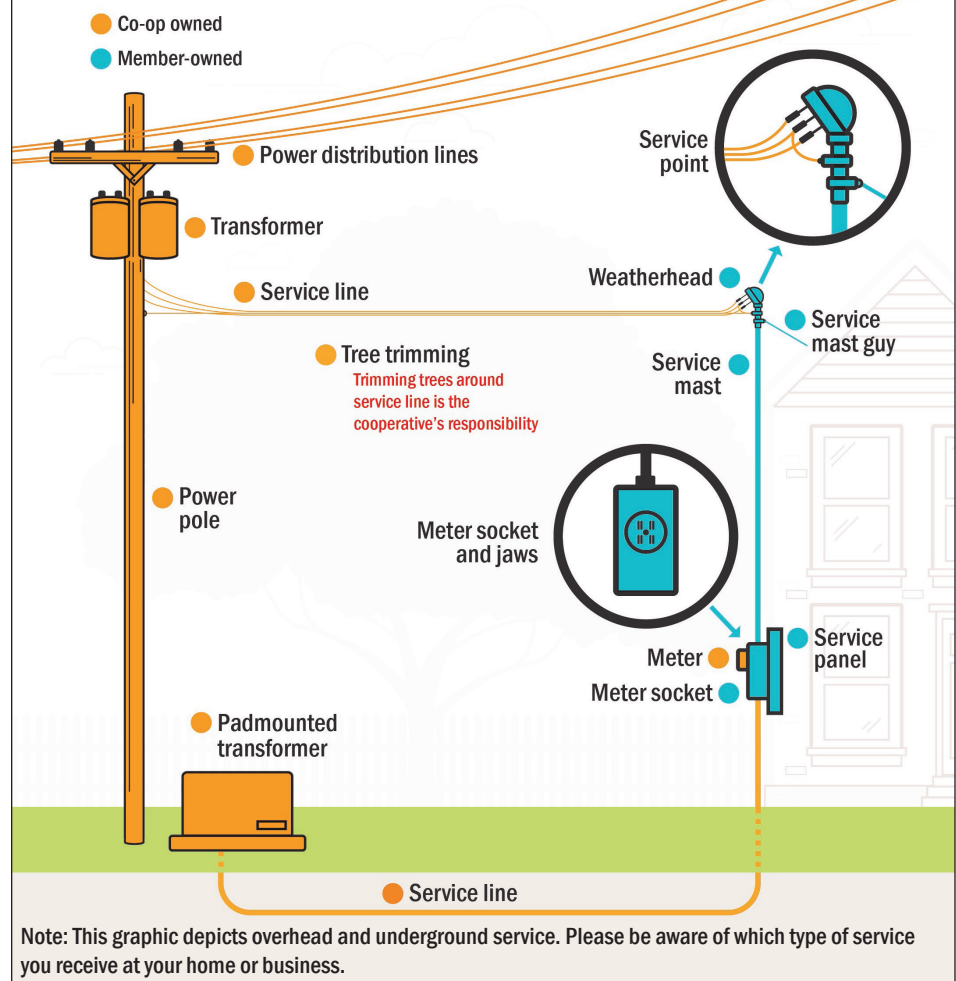
We are responsible for repairs if a storm damages any equipment Linn County REC owns. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.

Use the guide below to help you determine who typically owns what equipment. **If your meter is on a pole or pedestal, visit our website for a diagram depicting equipment owned by the cooperative and member.**

Who Owns What?

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue) if meter is located on the house. If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Important Tax Reminder -- Take Advantage Of Energy Efficiency Tax Credits

Tell your tax advisor or accountant about any energy efficiency improvements made at your principal residence in 2023. To view a complete list of available tax credits and requirements, visit www.energystar.gov.

Eligible households can claim a tax credit of 30% of the cost of qualified energy efficiency projects, up to \$1,200 annually through 2032.

Subject to the following caps:

- \$600 for Energy Star exterior windows and skylights
- \$250 for Energy Star exterior doors (or \$500 limit for all exterior doors)
- \$600 for central air conditioners and gas furnaces
- \$600 for electric panel upgrade to a 200-amp service
- Up to \$1,200 for insulation
- Up to \$2,000 for air-source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. The tax credit for installing heat pumps or heat pump water heaters does not count towards the annual \$1,200 limit.



Increase Your Energy Savings With A Heat Pump Water Heater

What's four times more efficient and saves you thousands? An ENERGY STAR-certified heat pump water heater! With a lifetime energy savings of over \$5600, plus potential tax credits and rebates totaling up to \$2650, this eco-friendly option is the smart choice for your wallet and the planet.

How Does It Work?

Heat pump water heaters are a great alternative to the conventional electric resistance water heater. Like an air-source heat pump (for heating and cooling your home), heat pump water heaters use electricity to move heat from one place to another instead of generating heat directly. The result is a water heater that can be two to three times more energy-efficient than conventional electric resistance water heaters. The heat pump water heater will pull heat from the surrounding air and transfer it to heat water in the storage tank at a higher temperature. In short, heat pumps work like a refrigerator but in reverse.

Linn County REC offers the following rebates on heat pump water heaters:

- ENERGY STAR Heat Pump Water Heater = \$650/unit
- Go Electric Bonus (switching from gas) = \$150

Online rebate forms with terms and conditions are available at www.linncountyrec.com.

STANDARD ELECTRIC WATER HEATER	HEAT PUMP WATER HEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heats Water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heats Water
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Built To Last	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Built To Last
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses Up To 50% Less Energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uses Up To 50% Less Energy

JUST BECAUSE THEY LOOK THE SAME DOESN'T MEAN THEY WORK THE SAME.
That's because *heat pump* water heaters work much more efficiently than their standard electric counterparts. And that means you can save up to 50% on your monthly electric water heating costs for years to come.

Generate Safely With These Tips

Never connect a standby generator to your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment:

Stationary Generator

- A professional should install an approved generator transfer switch that keeps your house circuits separate from Linn County REC's.

Portable Generator

- Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.
- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Ensure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.
- Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.
- Start the generator first before connecting appliances.



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

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Mexican Cornbread Casserole

1.5 lb ground pork sausage	1 (1-oz) pkg taco seasoning
2/3 cup salsa	3 boxes Jiffy cornbread mix
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese	1 cup shredded monterey jack cheese
1 (14.75-oz) can creamed corn	1 (4-oz) can diced green chiles undrained
6 large eggs	¾ cup milk

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray a 9×13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. In a large skillet, cook pork sausage over medium-high heat until no longer pink. Drain excess grease. Add taco seasoning and salsa to the skillet and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together jiffy mix, creamed corn, diced green chilies, eggs, and milk. Add sausage mixture and shredded cheese to the bowl. Stir well. Pour batter into the prepared baking dish. Bake uncovered for 30 to 35 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cornbread comes out clean. Garnish with cilantro or green onions.

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