

# living with energy

IN IOWA



Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

MARCH 2017

We're going to give 10 free shade trees *each* to 10 lucky electric co-op members! ▶ See page 5

## What's hot in garden design?

High school students:  
Win a spot on the  
**2017 Youth Tour!**

Visit our website at [www.cvrec.com](http://www.cvrec.com)

Maintain  
**proper clearance**  
around grain bins

Vegetation  
management  
**plan is working**

# Winter moratorium ends soon

Members who qualified for energy assistance during the winter moratorium please note that the moratorium ends April 1, 2017. If your account(s) are past due, you need to come in or call the office to make arrangements before April 1 to avoid interruption of your electrical service.



 Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



**Office**  
2090 Highway 5 South  
P.O. Box 486  
Albia, IA 52531-0486

**Office Hours**  
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

**Telephone Numbers**  
Days, nights or holidays:  
641-932-7126 (local)  
or 800-475-1702

**Website**  
[www.cvrec.com](http://www.cvrec.com)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

We accept



# Kathy Biederman retires after 28 years

On February 28, 2017, CVEC said goodbye to longtime member service representative, Kathy Biederman.

She began her career at CVEC in 1989 as the front desk receptionist; she was the face and voice who greeted members when they called or stopped in. Over the years, Kathy's role with the cooperative evolved into her last position of member service representative. Signing up hundreds of new members, transferring accounts, processing billing statements, answering billing questions and providing great member service are just a few of the numerous tasks Kathy has been charged with handling during the past 28 years.

"When I started at Chariton Valley Electric 28 years ago, I knew instantly that this would be the perfect job for me," she said. "It has been very rewarding to work with our members on a daily basis, along with having great board directors and employees throughout these years.



It has been amazing to watch how Chariton Valley has moved forward, especially in keeping up with modern technology in order to offer the best to our members. I will always be proud to say I was a Chariton Valley employee."

Kathy's retirement was celebrated at a cake reception with co-op employees, directors, family and close friends. CVEC commends and thanks Kathy on her dedicated years of service and wishes her well in retirement – we sure will miss her! 🌟

## STUDENT LEADERS

# Scholarship application deadline is March 30

CVEC will be awarding \$3,000 worth of scholarship money to graduating high school students – don't miss your chance to apply! Scholarship applications are due by March 30, 2017. For more information, check with your high school guidance counselor, call CVEC at 800-475-1702 or visit our website at [www.cvrec.com](http://www.cvrec.com).



# Managing physical threats is key to grid reliability

BY BRYON STILLEY

While the threat of cybersecurity attacks on the electric grid gets a lot of attention these days, physical damage from storms or critters is much more likely to disrupt power. There are many physical threats to our power delivery system that your cooperative works hard to manage on a daily basis. From weather events (such as ice storms, tornadoes and flooding) to criminal activity (including copper theft and shooting at a substation), it takes proactive commitment to consistently deliver reliable service.

If the lights do go out, we're ready to restore power as quickly and as safely as we can. Here are three key ways that we work to keep your power as reliable as possible.

## 1. Being part of the community

One of the most valuable things about being served by an electric cooperative is that you also have an ownership stake in the way the cooperative operates. Electric cooperatives know our communities. We live and work in the towns and neighborhoods we serve. You know many of the board members and employees of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., who are also personally acquainted with or are a part of fire departments, county supervisors, EMTs and other organizations.



We know that emergencies can happen at any time. These relationships are important in urgently responding to unplanned events or in preparing for more predictable events, including winter storms or summer flooding. For example, when a significant winter storm impacted almost every area of South Dakota over the Christmas holiday – leaving thousands without power – Iowa's electric cooperatives responded. That's because we're part of one large cooperative community and cooperation among cooperatives is an essential principle of providing reliable electric service.

## 2. Planning, preparing and practicing

There's a well-known saying: "It's not *if* a crisis will occur, but *when* it will occur." What constitutes a crisis can mean different things to member-owners, depending on the role electricity plays in their daily lives or businesses. We test our disaster and business continuity plans regularly and pride ourselves on being prepared at all times.

Our plans not only focus on how to prevent threats, but also how to respond and recover from them. For example, trees too close to power lines can cause major damage during a storm and may result in a lengthy outage. Business activities,

such as vegetation management or pole inspections, may seem routine; however, they're strategically performed to proactively reduce threats.

## 3. Coordinating with stakeholders

CVEC places a high importance on working partnerships with fellow cooperatives, our state and national electric cooperative associations, industry partners and government agencies to mitigate the potential impacts of all types of threats to our system. Electric cooperatives work closely with the rest of the electric industry, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on matters of critical infrastructure protection. This includes sharing needed information about potential threats and working together to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible.

Although the grid is incredibly resilient and can withstand many physical impacts, it's also a dynamic infrastructure that requires constant attention. We're vigilant in ensuring we protect the grid from physical and cyber threats in order to power your lives! ⚡

Bryon Stilley is the general manager of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win 10 shade trees!

Shade trees should be a major component in your plan for lowering your family's summer energy bills. To help you get started, we're going to give 10 lucky electric co-op members 10 free shade trees up to a foot tall. (You also may choose from other tree categories for delivery in May.) The winners also will receive a one-year membership to the Arbor Day Foundation, which includes the organization's newsletter, *The Tree Book* and generous discounts on future tree purchases. For more details on the Arbor Day Foundation, go to [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

To enter this month's contest, please visit the new *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) and complete the entry form by March 31, 2017. ⚡



# Vegetation management plan is working



Eight years ago, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative began a new tree-clearing program that called for a 20-foot-wide clearing on either side of the co-op's electric power lines. The result of this effort has exceeded expectations, with members noting a 67 percent reduction in power interruptions and blinking lights due to vegetation.

A good vegetation management plan to systematically control tree and brush growth along electric lines is a good thing to have, but it's also required. Your cooperative is required and regulated by our lender, Rural

Utilities Service, and the Iowa Utilities Board to maintain the right of way used not only by CVEC, but also by various utilities to provide much-needed services.

Your cooperative's vegetation management plan endeavors to accomplish three basic goals:

1. Provide safety to our members and the general public by keeping vegetation near power lines under control.
2. Deliver reliable electric service to our membership.
3. Maintain areas that have been controlled to keep electric rates affordable to all members.

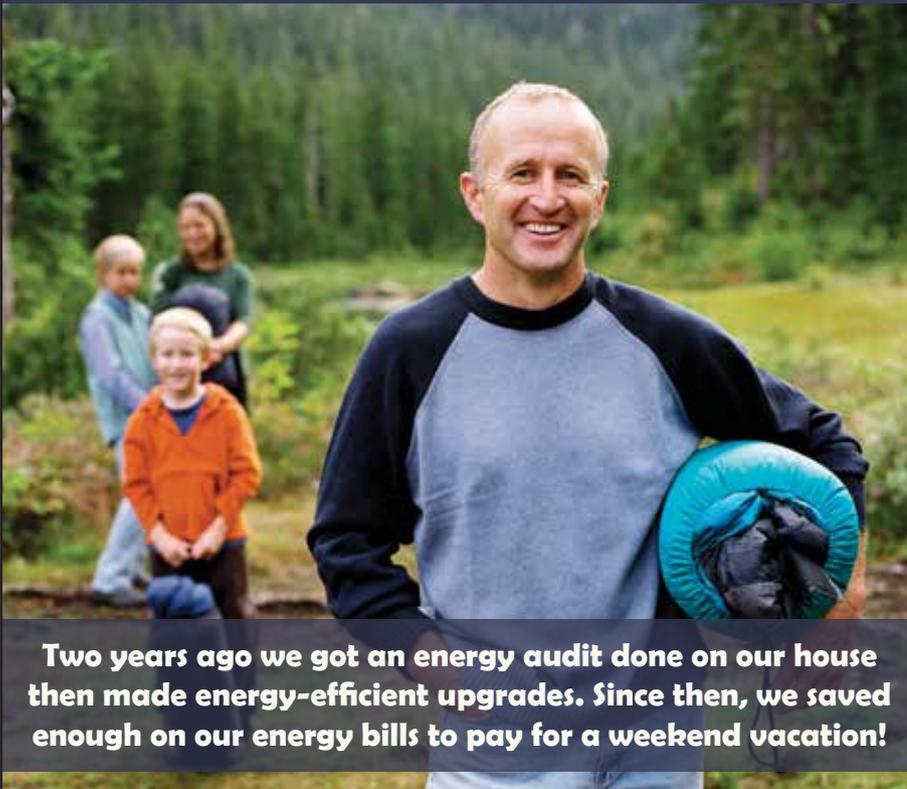
CVEC has contracted with Tom's Tree Service to clear trees within the City of Albia and surrounding areas throughout 2017. Spraying is also scheduled this year in the rural areas surrounding Albia; with the varieties of vegetation and landscaping within the City of Albia, we don't anticipate spraying any areas within the city.

We understand the approach is not always well liked, but it's proven – and members have shared over and over again that they enjoy and appreciate the improved reliability.

Our goal is to do everything we can to provide reliable and safe electricity in the most financially responsible manner. Nothing we do is driven by profits, because we're owned by those we serve. Everything we do is related to the strong customer bias that comes by virtue of being a cooperative.

If you have any questions or concerns about the tree-clearing program and how it may affect you, please contact the CVEC office at 641-932-7126. ⚡

## The audit sure paid off.



**Two years ago we got an energy audit done on our house then made energy-efficient upgrades. Since then, we saved enough on our energy bills to pay for a weekend vacation!**

Visit [www.TakeControlAndSave.coop](http://www.TakeControlAndSave.coop) to find out how you can start saving energy and money too!

**Take Control & Save**<sup>®</sup>  
[www.TakeControlAndSave.coop](http://www.TakeControlAndSave.coop)

 **Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative**  
A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

2090 Highway 5 South • Albia, IA 52531  
641-932-7126 • [cvrec.com](http://cvrec.com)

### OFFICE CLOSING

# Happy Easter!

**CVEC's office will be closed on Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday.**