

THE CONNECTION

THE ADVANTAGES OF MEMBER CONTROL

Consumers Energy and all of Iowa's electric cooperatives are distinctly different from the state's investor-owned utilities (IOUs) because of our unique business structure. Cooperatives are created, owned, and directed by you, our members. In contrast, IOUs are capitalized, owned, and directed by investors – their stockholders.

An important element of the co-ops' method of doing business is local member control, which allows the co-ops to make decisions that are in the best interests of the members they serve. Consumers Energy and other electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis and provide service at the cost of operations. This allows us to focus on efficiency and quality of service. IOUs, on the other hand, must focus on profits, since their stockholders – who demand a return on their investment – often are not the companies' customers.

Of course, electric cooperatives are subject to working within a limited number of state and federal guidelines. But the state's IOUs are regulated by the Iowa Utilities Board and by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington, D.C. This oversight exists to balance the significantly different interests of the IOUs' stockholders and their customers.

Decisions about Consumers Energy are made by people who live in the community, not by bureaucrats in Des Moines or Washington, D.C. As a member of your co-op, you share ownership in the system and have a voice in our operations. You have a vote in electing directors who are responsible for setting the rates, developing the policies, and putting together the procedures for running the cooperative on both a daily and long-term basis.

Our directors are elected to the board by the membership during the co-op's Annual Business Meeting.

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Jim Kidd

WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST:

**Send in your photos of
Consumers Energy's
Annual Meeting!**

◆ ◆ ◆

Winners for the month of June:
**Garry & Judith Engeltjes,
Alleman
Eric Brown, Zeiring**

Here's how to enter:

1. Answer the question or challenge posed each month.
2. Send answers to Consumers Energy with:
 - . Name
 - . Service address
 - . Account number
 - . Phone number
 - . Email address

Email to: kglenney@consumersenergy.coop
Subject line: Contest

Mail to: Consumers Energy
2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158
3. Winners' names will be drawn at random and published in upcoming issues of *The Connection*.

August 2017

Consumers Energy
– Your Source for
Power and Information

Dates To Remember:

Aug. 1	Read Meters
Aug. 3	Bills Due
Aug. 3	Automatic Payments Deducted
Aug. 9	Mail Bills
Aug. 25	Automatic Payments Deducted
Aug. 26	Annual Business Meeting & Member Appreciation Breakfast
Sept. 1	Read Meters
Sept. 3	Bills Due
Sept. 4	Labor Day, Office Closed

Make your Annual Meeting registration easy!

Simply bring your Quick Registration Card (included in your Annual Meeting mailing from early August) to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 26, with any updated contact information and the number of people in your party noted on the card. Hand the card to one of the attendants at the registration area, and you're all set for breakfast!



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158
641-752-1593 / 800-696-6552
Fax: 641-752-5738

Email: info@consumersenergy.coop
Website: www.consumersenergy.coop

2017 Annual Meeting Quick Registration Card

Please join Consumers Energy at
your Member Appreciation Breakfast
and Annual Business Meeting.

Details on back.

All members can attend this function
without the Quick Registration Card.

This card will simply make the
registration process faster for members.

JOHN SMITH
123 ABC Way
Any City, IA 55555

Number of people in your party attending
the Member Appreciation Breakfast and
Annual Business Meeting _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

You do not need to bring this card to attend the Annual Meeting. This card is simply a courtesy to help make the registration process as quick and simple as possible

That old appliance may be costing a lot more
than it's worth. Consumers Energy can help
you recycle your old, working appliances.
The best part: YOU get paid!



Refrigerator:
\$35



Freezer:
\$25



Window Air
Conditioner:
\$25

Consumers Energy's

Pull the Plug PROGRAM

PHONE: 800-696-6552

EMAIL: INFO@CONSUMERSENERGY.COOP

Consumers Energy Board Approves \$250,000 in Patronage Capital Retirement

At Consumers Energy's board meeting on June 22, 2017, the Board of Directors approved the retirement of \$250,000 of patronage capital credits. This patronage capital retirement will show as a credit for each member's portion of this retirement on electric bills received in August 2017.

The retirement of patronage capital credits is a tangible demonstration of member ownership in Consumers Energy. As a member-owned cooperative, Consumers Energy operates as a not-for-profit utility. Any "profits" made by the cooperative are referred to as margins.

From the time the margins are generated until they are returned, this money is put to work within the cooperative, minimizing debt financing and strengthening our financial position.



Consumers Energy's Board of Directors

Your elected Board of Directors must first consider the financial condition of the co-op and the needs for capital funds for coming years before distributing patronage capital credits. The patronage capital credit amount is determined by the board and is set at a level that maintains the financial integrity of the co-op. The board evaluates Consumers Energy's equity goals, the cost of borrowing money, plant growth, and storm reserves before retiring patronage capital credits.

Please contact Consumers Energy at 800-696-6552 with questions about your portion of the retirement or the patronage capital retirement process.

CONSUMERS ENERGY
2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158-9137
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Payment Drop-Off Locations
Nevada Outpost: 919 SW 3rd Street, Nevada, IA 50201
Hy-Vee: 802 S. Center Street, Marshalltown, IA 50168

Main Office: 2074 242nd Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday
800-696-6552 or 641-752-1563

View or Pay Your Bill Online
www.consumersenergy.com

Billing Date: 12/09/2016

4 3244
D-16 7-16

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Message Center
Check your bill for a capital credit refund! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Account Number	Description	Property Address
ACCOUNT SUMMARY		
Average Temperature	Previous Balance	120.83
This Month:	Payment Received - Thank You	-120.83
Last Month: 56	Balance Forward	0.00
Last Year: 42	Total Electric Charges	189.48
	Capital Credit Refund	-18.47
	Total Due	172.99

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Previous Balance	120.83
Payment Received - Thank You	-120.83
Balance Forward	0.00
Total Electric Charges	189.48
Capital Credit Refund	-18.47
Total Due	172.99

Total Amount Due ON OR BEFORE 01/03/2017: \$172.99
Total Amount Due AFTER 01/03/2017: \$175.58
Enter Payment Amount: Credit Card - Do Not Pay

CONSUMERS ENERGY
2074 242nd STREET
MARSHALLTOWN IA 50158-9137

000310890200017299000175581



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

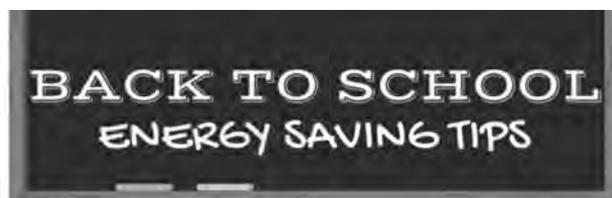
Automatic Bill Payment has been made easier for members!

Members have been able to sign up for automatic bill payment through Consumers Energy for some time, but now the process is even easier for members! Simply go to the homepage of the co-op's Website at www.consumersenergy.coop, and click the green button located on the left side of the page titled Automatic Bill Pay. Complete the form, and submit. It's that easy!

For more information, contact the Member Services Department by calling 800-696-6552 or emailing info@consumersenergy.coop.



Summer is a time of blowing fans, air conditioning, and the continuous opening of the fridge – especially when the kids are home. The back to school season is a great time to get your energy efficiency back on track. Here are some tips to help get you started:



✓ Increase Your Temperature Setting

With fewer people at home during the day, raise the thermostat by a few degrees during those hours. Lower it to start cooling about half an hour before your family gets home. You can save anywhere from 4-8 percent on your cooling costs with every degree you increase the temperature. As the weather starts to get colder, reverse the process so your home is cooler during the day and warmer at night.

✓ Make Smart Use of Your Fridge

When preparing lunch for your kids, take out all the food you need in order to prep first and then close the fridge door. Keeping the door open, or constantly opening and closing it to take out and put things back, forces your fridge to work harder to keep a consistent temperature. This results in higher energy costs.

✓ Unplug Unused Devices

When not being used, make it a habit to unplug all those gadgets like iPods, laptops, and video game consoles. Even turned off, these devices will still consume power when they're plugged in. These "energy vampires" can account for 5-10 percent of your total household electricity bill.

✓ Close or Open Curtains, Blinds, or Drapes

Proper use of window coverings can shave significant costs off your electric bill. If the temperature is still warm, close those curtains, blinds, or drapes to keep your house cooler so your air conditioner does not have to work as hard to cool your home. As temperatures drop, open up the curtains to take advantage of the sun's heat to warm up your home.

✓ Get Your HVAC Checked

Back to school season is a great time to hire a qualified HVAC contractor to inspect your furnace. Make sure your heating unit is running smoothly and is ready to face the cooler autumn weather. Having to make repairs in the dead of winter is both horribly uncomfortable and extremely expensive.

✓ Use Your Dishwasher Efficiently

Load up your dishwasher completely before starting a wash cycle. Also use the air-dry setting instead of the heat-dry setting in order to reduce energy usage by up to 7 percent.

✓ Inspect the Water Heater

Getting ready for school and work can put a strain on an old or undersized water heater, making showers chilly. If your water heater is nearing ten years old, it may be time for an energy-efficient upgrade from Consumers Energy. Check out the co-op's water heating options at www.consumersenergy.coop under the Programs/Services tab.

If you have questions about any of these tips, please contact one of the co-op's Energy Advisors, C.D. Kendall or Jeff Lanning, at 800-696-6552.



Welcome to School!



SCHOOL IS COOL! WORD JUMBLE

Search across and down for the words below.
(Hint: Find the first letter in each word and read across or down from there.)

SCHOOL	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	Y	W	T
FRIEND	S	C	H	O	O	L	E	B	S	C
CHALK	C	S	C	F	B	S	A	P	M	M
READ	H	C	H	R	O	M	D	L	A	A
MUSIC	I	I	A	I	O	A	U	A	T	W
SMART	F	E	L	E	A	R	N	Y	H	R
GROW	W	N	K	N	P	T	B	U	P	I
TEACHER	O	C	T	D	B	O	O	K	S	T
LEARN	R	E	M	U	S	I	C	G	R	E
WRITE	K	T	E	B	U	S	G	R	O	W
SCIENCE										
WORK										
PLAY										
MATH										
BUS										
BOOKS										

WORD LINK-UPS

Draw lines linking school words that go together. Be careful - some words have more than one match. But there is only one way that the entire list of words in Column A can be linked up with Column B so that each word has its own match.

Column 1

school
back
lunch
pencil
best
art
science
math
book
spelling
report
substitute
library

Column 2

box
problem
book
friend
experiment
card
test
teacher
case
project
report
bus



PRESTO-CHANGO

To solve this word puzzle, you must read the directions then make the changes described in each step. You'll begin at the SCHOOLHOUSE, and if you make the changes correctly, you'll end up in a very different place!

SCHOOLHOUSE

1. Replace the first H with E. _____
2. Insert an R at the end. _____
3. Move the 2nd S to before the 1st S. _____
4. Reverse the 1st E and C. _____
5. Delete OOLHOU. _____
6. Reverse the order of the letters to see where you are now. _____



Annual Business Meeting

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2017
CONSUMERS ENERGY
2074 242ND STREET
MARSHALLTOWN, IA 50158

& Member Appreciation Breakfast



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Attend YOUR Annual Meeting for:

PANCAKE
breakfast

FUN
& Games

ELECT
directors

attendance
PRIZES

ANNUAL
report

win
CASH

and more!



8:30 - 10:00 a.m.
Registration & Pancake Breakfast
10:00 a.m.
Annual Business Meeting &
Election of Directors

Special visit from our friends at the



IOWA'S WILDEST ADVENTURE



Last summer, my mom and dad took me and _____
(person)

on a trip to _____. The weather there is very
(place)

_____. Northern _____ has many
(adjective) (same place)

_____, and they make _____ there.
(plural noun) (adjective) (plural noun)

Many people also go to _____ to _____ or
(place) (action verb)

see the _____. The people that live there love to
(plural noun)

eat _____ and are very proud of their big
(plural noun)

_____. They also like to _____ in
(noun) (action verb)

the sun and swim in the _____! It was a really
(action verb)

_____ trip!
(adjective)





Office Hours
7:30 am — 4:30 pm
Monday through Friday

Contact Us

2074 242nd Street • Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
Phone: 641-752-1593 • Toll-Free: 800-696-6552
Fax: 641-752-5738 • E-mail: info@consumersenergy.coop

www.consumersenergy.coop

Directors:

Bill Hobson, President
Mark Wampler, Vice President
Pat VonAhnen, Secretary-Treasurer
Allan Ambrecht, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
Terry Benskin
Jeff Edler
Arden Greiner
Bob Meimann
John Ripley

If you have an idea for a topic for *The Connection*, please contact Kippen Glenney at 800-696-6552 or kglenney@consumersenergy.coop.

Secure Payments System Coming Soon

Secure Payments is an automated pay-by-telephone system to process debit/credit card and check payments. This system is being implemented to enhance security for our members.

Secure Payments will allow members to:

- check account balances
- make payments
- store card or electronic check information for future payments



The Secure Payments system is automated, free to use, and is available 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. More details to come in future editions of *The Connection*.

THE ADVANTAGES OF MEMBER CONTROL *(continued from page 8-A)*

They are chosen based on their knowledge of and interest in the co-op, their reputation for sound judgment, and their leadership skills. Our directors are local leaders who know their neighbors and often serve on civic, agricultural, church, or labor organizations; they also may be members of a local school board or zoning commission. The bottom line is that our directors know the area, and they know the people who live in it. They are responsive to the opinions of their neighbors and strive to provide them with reliable electric service at reasonable rates.

To vote for your directors, attend your Annual Business Meeting & Member Appreciation Breakfast:

Saturday, August 26, 2017

Registration, Voting, & Breakfast: 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Annual Business Meeting: 10:00 a.m.

Local ownership and member control makes Consumers Energy much more responsive to the needs of our members, and we are proud to actively be involved in enhancing the quality of life in the areas where you live, work, and play. Your electric cooperative is not owned by far-away investors, and it is not run by an appointed board of directors. Your electric cooperative is run by a democratically elected board that is given the privilege to serve because of your vote. To have your voice heard, mail your completed ballot that was sent to you in early August in the envelope provided or come to the Annual Meeting to vote in person and visit with the directors and employees of your electric cooperative.

~ Jim Kidd, General Manager