

CCECA NEWS

Monthly publication for member-owners

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MANAGER'S REPORT

WINTER RELIABILITY FORECASTS SHOWS ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR 2025-2026 SEASON



In November, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) released its 2025/2026 Winter Reliability Assessment. In that report, Southwest Power Pool (SPP)—our regional transmission operator (RTO)—is projected to have sufficient generation capacity to meet expected demand under normal winter conditions.

While many RTOs across the country face elevated reliability risks this winter, our region is not among them. That's encouraging news and a reflection of the extensive work happening behind the scenes to strengthen grid reliability.

While we've recently shared updates about upcoming rate adjustments, we want to use this space to highlight the reliability work that often goes unseen but is critical to keeping your electricity dependable.

What Is a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO)?

Electric utilities nationwide are members of one of nine regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs), also called power pools. These entities are federally regulated by FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) and work on a regional scale to coordinate, control, and monitor supply and demand on the electric grid. RTOs do not own the power grid, but they work as "air-traffic controllers" of the grid to ensure reliable power supplies, adequate transmission infrastructure, and "day-ahead" electric market coordination of wholesale electricity prices on behalf of their members.

While SPP is not listing reliability as being at a high risk level for the upcoming winter season, our industry continues to navigate significant long-term challenges in maintaining a resilient and reliable electric grid.

The changing energy landscape presents both opportunities and challenges. While the SPP region has made substantial progress in bolstering its transmission infrastructure and adding renewable energy resources like wind and solar, the variable nature of these resources requires careful planning to maintain reliability. A key factor contributing to improved stability is SPP's new Planning Reserve Margin policy.

What Is a Planning Reserve Margin?

Calhoun County Electric Cooperative, SPP, and our power supplier, Corn Belt Power, must be prepared for periods of extreme demand. To do that, we rely on reserve margins—extra generating capacity held in reserve to meet unexpected needs. Reserve margins represent the percentage of unused generation available during peak

demand. Nationwide and within SPP, these margins are shrinking. When reserve margins tighten, there's less buffer for unexpected outages (i.e. plant mechanical failure) or emergencies, increasing the risk of forced interruptions.

Maintaining reliability requires a diverse mix of generation resources. Dispatchable resources—coal, natural gas, and nuclear—remain essential when renewable output drops. Yet many of these traditional plants face retirement pressures due to federal emissions regulations that often require technologies not yet commercially available or economically feasible.



Source: NERC

Figure 1: Winter Reliability Risk Area Summary

Proactive Steps to Ensure Reliability

Calhoun County Electric Cooperative and its partners are taking decisive action to maintain grid reliability for our members through several key initiatives:

- Advocating for Reliability and Affordability: Electric cooperatives across the country are owned by you, the members we serve. This means that our cooperative works together with other electric cooperatives to educate lawmakers and advocate on behalf of our members to ensure that reliable power is also competitively priced.
- Resource Diversification: Nationally, there is increasing reliance on renewable energy sources, and at the same time, we're seeing fossil fuel plants taken offline, often ahead of schedule. Additionally, we're seeing more pressure on the electric grid due to the ever-present severe weather events and historic rising demand, as we begin to electrify more sectors of our economy in the form of electric vehicles, data storage and cryptocurrency. Calhoun County Electric Cooperative believes and advocates for an all-of-the-above energy approach. The "all-of-the-above" approach promotes the idea that the United States relies on a reliable and sustainable fuel supply. There is great value in maintaining a diverse mix of fuel sources—fossil fuels and renewables-to ensure reliability and resiliency and meet the growing demand for electricity.
- **Grid Infrastructure:** As a member of Corn Belt Power, we pool resources and expertise to invest in technology, security, and infrastructure to deliver reliable and cost-effective power. Our operations are dedicated to strengthening our electric infrastructure through targeted



IOWA YOUTH TOUR 2026 - APPLY NOW!

Every generation leaves behind a legacy, footprints that shape the future. Iowa Youth Tour is your chance to do the same. For over 60 years, electric cooperatives have sent high school students to Washington, D.C., to discover their voice, step into history and begin writing the story only they can tell.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience isn't just about seeing the nation's capital. It's about preparing students to lead, to grow and to make their mark on the world.

What's in it for students?

Delegates from lowa will join over 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., June 14-20.

During the trip, students will:

- Develop leadership skills through hands-on experiences and workshops
- Strengthen their resumes with a nationally recognized program that stands out to colleges and employers
- Connect with peers from 44 states, building friendships that last long after the trip
- Meet with elected officials and learn how government impacts their communities
- Experience history up close by visiting world-class museums and monuments
- Learn about cooperatives and how they support rural communities across America

The best part? All expenses — travel, lodging, meals, and program costs — are covered by Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association. The program is coordinated by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Don't Let This Opportunity Pass By

Applications for Youth Tour are open now until March 6, 2026. If you know a local sophomore or junior who is ready to grow as a leader and take the next step in their journey, encourage them to apply today.

For additional details, visit our wesite at calhounrec.coop or contact our office.

This is more than a trip - it's a chance to make your mark.

CCECA NEWS

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upgrades and new construction projects, which will enhance regional connectivity and resilience.

- Emergency Preparedness: We work closely with SPP and neighboring utilities to protect our members from potential energy shortages and price spikes associated with having to purchase more power when demand is elevated. By having detailed response plans in place, we can take steps to reduce electricity demand during critical periods helping avoid the need to purchase expensive power from the market when prices are at their highest. This coordinated approach helps keep your electricity both reliable and affordable.
- Regional Coordination: We actively participate in SPP's reliability initiatives and maintain close coordination with neighboring utilities to support regional grid stability. By working to prepare for and respond to energy shortfalls, we can follow protocols to reduce electric demand and prevent us from having to purchase excess energy from the markets or avoid the need to interrupt power supply.

Our wholesale power provider, Corn Belt Power, works closely with SPP and other regional partners to address these long-term challenges while maintaining reliable and affordable electric service for our member-consumers. As we dedicate ourselves to powering your homes and communities throughout the winter season, know we are committed to doing everything we can to maintain your trust and find solutions to keep your power reliable and your rates stable.

SOUTHWEST POWER POOL GRID CONDITIONS



LEADING THROUGH CHANGE: STATEWIDE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), the trade association for Iowa's electric cooperatives, conducted its 2025 Annual Meeting at the Sheraton West Des Moines Conference Center on December 4 and 5 with more than 375 registered attendees. Board directors and employees from Iowa's locally owned electric co-ops received informative updates from statewide directors and staff in addition to learning about industry trends and best practices from invited speakers.

"Our theme of Leading through Change aptly describes what our industry is experiencing right now," remarked IAEC Executive Vice President and General Manager Leslie Kaufman. It has been a year of new leadership at IAEC with Board President Jim Miller taking the helm a year ago with two new board directors, and Kaufman completing her first year at IAEC in July.



In his president's report, Miller reflected on his year of serving as board president and how "a farm kid from Fonda" received a call from Governor Reynolds in his second week in the leadership role. He also shared how Kaufman traveled to meet with member co-ops in her first months on the job and how those face-to-face discussions with directors and staff informed their strategic planning. Kaufman then shared successes and future plans by department in her executive report to the members.

As part of the Annual Meeting program, IAEC coordinated an auction of personally donated items which raised over \$16,200 for the lowa Friends of Rural Electrification (lowa FORE) political action committee. The funds stay in lowa to aid state legislators and candidates who support electric cooperatives.

More About Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives is a trade association which represents the interests of locally owned electric cooperatives in the state, including 38 distribution co-ops and nine generation and transmission co-ops. Formed more than 80 years ago, IAEC provides many vital functions for its members including legislative representation, regulatory oversight, training and education services, safety programs, and communications support. View the 2025 annual report and learn more at www.iowarec.org.



CELEBRATING DEDICATION

Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association was proud to celebrate two major employee milestones in 2025. Bret McAlister, Line Superintendent, marked an incredible 30 years of service, and Journeyman Lineman Ben Wiederin celebrated 15 years with the cooperative. Together, their dedication, skill, and commitment represent 45 years of keeping the lights on for our members.

Bret began his career at CCECA in 1995 and has spent three decades serving our members with unmatched knowledge and leadership. His steady guidance, problemsolving abilities, and deep understanding of our system have made him a trusted resource both in the field and within the cooperative.

Ben joined CCECA in 2010 and has developed into a highly skilled and dependable lineman. Known for his strong work ethic and calm approach during challenging restoration work, he plays a vital role in maintaining safe and reliable service for our members.

We are grateful for Bret and Ben's longstanding commitment to our cooperative values service, safety, and community. Please join us in congratulating both of them on these remarkable achievements. Their dedication continues to strengthen CCECA and the communities we serve.

Pictured L to R: Bret McAlister & Ben Wiederin

CCECA HELPS SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER

This season, Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association has been proud to take part in several holiday traditions that spread joy throughout our community. Administrative Assistant/Communications Specialist Menley Hildreth helped with the setup for the Rockwell City Festival of Trees, where CCECA also sponsored and decorated a festive tree for the annual display.

CCECA linemen once again volunteered their time to help hang Christmas lights around the Rockwell City square, ensuring the town shines bright for the holidays.

Additionally, CCECA contributed to the SCC After Prom Christmas Light Trail, creating a light display to support the fundraiser and help make the event both magical and successful.

From lending a hand behind the scenes to spreading holiday cheer in our office and lighting up our community spaces, we are grateful for the opportunity to support local celebrations that make the season a little brighter for all. Giving back is at the heart of what we do — and we're grateful for the opportunity to help make the season special for our member-owners and community.









Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association is proud to support local students pursuing their future goals. This year, CCECA will award four \$500 scholarships to area seniors. In addition to our local scholarship, we are able to provide the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, which will award \$1,500 to our top applicant and \$1,000 to the runner-up.

Dependents of Calhoun County Electric Cooperative members are eligible to apply for both scholarships. The application period for both opportunites is open from now until Friday, February 6, 2026. Applications and additional details can be found on our website, calhounrec.coop/scholarships.

We encourage all eligible students to apply and take advantage of these great opportunities! Feel free to contact our office at 712-297-7112 with any questions.

FEBRUARY 19-20, 2026

IOWA BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS:

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

offered t first-hand, how your power providers convert energy mined and see how those mines are then returned to walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired other cooperative member-owners while traveling to	Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association and Corn Belt Power Cooperative wite you to join us for one of two Energy Trail Tours being this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet engether across the Dakotas on-board a motor-coach bound for from Calhoun County Electric will be selected at random
☑ YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.	First Person Second Person
Our first and second choice of dates:	Address
June 24-26 1st 2nd (please circle) July 15-17 1st 2nd	City
	Phone
I/we I have I have not participated in this tour in the past.	Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by April 29, 2026.

January Member Challenge

Find the answers within the stories, features, and content of this newsletter and you could win a prize. Send your answer to member challenge@calhounrec.coop, clip and mail to:

Calhoun County Electric Cooperative, PO Box 312, Rockwell City, IA 50579 or submit on our website: www.calhounrec.coop/member-challenge-submission. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember there is a deadline!

Entries for this issue **must be received by February 1st**. Three names will be drawn from all correct entries. Members will receive a **\$10 credit** on their account. Members who answer the questions correctly and participate at least 4 times throughout the year, will be eligible for a \$100 Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Pre-Paid Debit card, through a random drawing, at the end of the year.

Congratulations November winners:

Marvin Nimke, Mary Ellen Metzger, and James Whitehill

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2. Applications for Youth Tour are open now until March, 2026	
3. Bret McAlister, Line Superintendent, marked an incredible years of s Journeyman Lineman Ben Wiederin celebrated years with the coope	

Name

Reach Us

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CONTACT US 24/7: General Phone: (712) 297-7112

Toll Free: (800) 821-4879

Visit us online: www.calhounrec.coop

Email:

info@calhounrec.coop

DIRECTORS:

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