

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

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Celebrating
84
YEARS



Norris Electric Cooperative had its beginning in the dreams and hopes of a group of people starting in the year 1936. They wanted something for themselves and their families they did not have ... electricity. These people were pioneers.

These pioneers in their preliminary plans started the long, tiresome job of incorporating Norris Electric Cooperative. On Sept. 18, 1938, Norris Electric Cooperative became a reality and was officially organized.

The first pole was set on Sept. 9, 1939 on the farm of Bud May. On Dec. 21, 1939, the first line was energized. More than 550 farmers, covering a territory of 217 miles, now received the power they had been waiting for. Over the years, our membership has grown to 15,205 and 4,125 miles of energized lines in eight counties.

Many things have changed in the last 84 years. Equipment and technology have made a drastic difference in the way the co-op functions today. However, through it all, our one goal that has not changed in 84 years is our mission to provide reliable electricity at an affordable price!

We celebrate and reflect on those strong individuals that were the forefathers of Norris Electric Cooperative. They were fearsome in their dreams and goals, and we thank them. For without their tenacity to see this project through, life would have had a different story than we know it today.

Recent survey results show Norris Electric Cooperative has one of the lowest co-op rates in the state of Illinois!

Norris Electric was named after Senator George W. Norris, who is known for his intense crusade to bring electricity to the rural communities. Below is a letter he wrote Mr. Yost, the Manager of Norris Electric, in 1940.

Dear Mr. Yost,

I wish I could be present in person at the first annual meeting of the board of directors and stockholders of the Norris Electric Cooperative.

The advancement which the world has made from barbarism to civilization is, after all, simply a history of the development and advancement of humanity in its struggle to obtain more freedom, more prosperity, and more happiness. The one thing which in modern times has done more than any other one thing to promote this happiness has been the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric current. This unknown element, but little understood even now by scientific men, has relieved humanity of much of the drudgery and labor that comes to all struggling mortals. For many years, it has been apparent to those who had the vision to see into the future and to judge it by the past, that those who live in the country, on the farms, had not been able to share in this development, this advancement. Agriculture, the cornerstone of all that goes to make life more enjoyable, to increase the happiness of men and women, had not been receiving its just share of these blessings. Electricity, given to all the residents of our cities and town, was to a great extent denied those living on the farms.

This injustice came about because the control of electricity was mainly in the hands of men and corporations who were using it to advance their own selfish interests. In their greed to control and monopolize its generation and distribution they had left out the farmer, because other fields offered greater opportunities for them to achieve financial success. In their control of electricity, they were guilty of jugglery and concealment, through the use of mysterious methods little understood by the ordinary

person. The establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration has done more than any other one thing to break this vicious chain of greedy manipulators and monopolistic speculators. It has brought this mysterious element of existence into the homes of the farmers and to the firesides of those who toil to produce the things that humanity must have, if it is to live. It has given to agriculture what has heretofore always been denied it, because it was controlled by monopolistic influences of human greed.

This unknown power is an element of nature. Every falling stream, coming from the mountains through the plains, down to the sea, has within it possibilities for happiness, for prosperity, little understood even by scientific experts. The farmer has more use for electric power than the dweller in the city. He is going to become the best customer of all. He has all of the uses for electricity which the city man has, and many more, in addition.

As I have said, it is still in its infancy. Since the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration, even, there have been many advancements and improvements in the field of electricity. We had been taught, or at least an attempt had been made to teach us, that only private initiative could bring about these improvements and advancements, but history shows that what brings about improvement is the widest, most universal use of electricity. The REA has improved and reduced its cost in nearly every avenue through which electricity could enter.

Instead of concealing and withholding for financial benefit any improvement that may be possible in the field of electricity, its public use gives these benefits to all. The REA has reduced the cost of generation and transmission of electricity. To a great extent, it has simplified it. Every farmer has in his home, thanks to the REA, a practical application of many of these

improvements. Other improvements are on the verge of general application, brought about by the investigation and experiments of public officials, particularly in the Rural Electrification Administration. History is going to show that this wider use of electricity on the farm is going to rebound to the benefit of the people in the cities as well, because they will be able to profit by the improvements made in rural electricity. You are part of this great army that is bringing about this great improvement, this increased prosperity, and this increased happiness for all of our people.

Electricity has brought a new servant into the homes of millions of people, a servant that pays no attention to hours or labor, or to salary received. This servant brings to the housewife, especially on the farm, a new and efficient hired girl. She is best pleased when she works the hardest. Her salary decreases as her proficiency and ability increase. She has relieved the housewife of the drudgery that has driven many a growing girl from the farm to the city. This new servant is bringing happiness and contentment to farm neighborhoods. She works 24 hours in the day, and never gets tired. She has no Thursday off, and never even stops to go to church on Sunday.

A new hired man has also appeared on the farm. He possesses the same characteristics and is imbued with the same ardor for improvement and desire to relieve the farmer of drudgery and hard work. He works while the farmer sleeps. He never lags in his enthusiasm, even while the farmer sleeps. He does not require the watchful care or supervision of any master. And these servants are doing all of this through one of the natural resources which God gave to His people.

Senator George W. Norris



The Annual Pioneer City Rodeo will be held Sept. 2-5, 2022 in Palestine, Ill.

Norris Electric is joining in on the fun.

Norris Electric is sponsoring the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon Tethered Rides (weather permitting) on Saturday, Sept. 3rd from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Come join in on the fun ... hope to see you there!

Five Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty ★ ★ ★

America's electric cooperatives, including Norris Electric, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. There are many important policy issues that directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While Norris Electric is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. Through our non-partisan grassroots program known as "Co-ops Vote," we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. There's power in numbers, and when we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

National Voter Registration Day is September 20, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or simply to make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty.

1. Don't assume your voter registration status is up to date. Visit vote.coop, then click "Election Resources" to verify your status.

2. Get informed. In addition to ensuring your registration is up to date, learning about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote.
3. Get active on social media. Follow @coopsvote on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady; encourage your friends and family to do the same.
4. Help others prepare to vote. Work a National Voter Registration Day event (visit nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events), volunteer to be a poll worker during midterm elections or offer to drive others to their polling places.
5. Vote! It's the easiest—and most important—way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

We encourage everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact.



Stay safe on your ranch or farm

There are all types of precautions ranchers and farmers take to stay safe. Electrical hazards, however, can sometimes be overlooked since electricity is not seen or heard, and overhead power lines can become part of the landscape.

Here are some electrical safety tips to implement on your farm or ranch:

- In general, look for exposed energized parts and unguarded electrical equipment that could become energized unexpectedly.
- Be careful when operating watering tanks with electric pumps. In addition, sprays of water from irrigation systems should not be near overhead power lines.
- Inspect electrical fencing regularly to ensure that everything is tight and secure and that no parts are frayed. A sagging fence not only means that animals could escape, but it can also create electrical issues.
- Ensure your electric fence is well supported. A lack of support can cause it to sag.
- Make sure electric fencing is visible by using electric fence tape, warning signs or other methods.
- Cap posts, especially metal T-posts, to prevent an animal (or human) from becoming impaled.
- Be aware of overhead power lines when moving bales of hay.
- Do not store hay bales under power lines.
- Be aware that tarps that cover hay can come loose and blow in heavy winds, sometimes causing an outage if the tarp gets too close or contacts a power line.
- When using a generator and double throw switch, make sure they are in good working order and up to code.
- Check electrical center pivot equipment before and after use to ensure it is grounded, that the housing is



protected and that the wiring is sound (this protects livestock and people).

- Ensure that irrigation equipment is regularly inspected. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for inspection and maintenance.
- Always turn off the power before working on an irrigation system.
- After a storm, make sure the system has not become ungrounded due to lightning.
- Position irrigation pipes at least 15 feet away from power lines; also, store unused pipes away from power lines.
- Always be aware of overhead power line locations and use a spotter when working close to lines or poles.
- Follow safe digging procedures; call 8-1-1 to have underground utilities marked before breaking ground.

To learn more about electrical safety on the ranch or farm or in general, visit SafeElectricity.org.

7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES



1
VOLUNTARY AND
OPEN MEMBERSHIP



2
DEMOCRATIC
MEMBER CONTROL



3
MEMBERS' ECONOMIC
PARTICIPATION



4
AUTONOMY AND
INDEPENDENCE



5
EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND INFORMATION



6
COOPERATION AMONG
COOPERATIVES



7
CONCERN FOR
COMMUNITY