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# Energy INSIDER

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION OF MIDLAND POWER COOPERATIVE • [MIDLANDPOWER.COOP](http://MIDLANDPOWER.COOP) • SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2022

## Midland Power Cooperative marks safety achievements



Director of Safety Chase Bachman and First Class Journeyman Lineman Gerod Schafer.

Midland Power Cooperative recently marked two significant safety accomplishments.

Earlier this year, the cooperative surpassed 300,000 employee

hours worked without a lost time accident. This amounts to more than three years of employees working safely. These hours include hazardous storm recovery efforts, including the storm on December 15, 2021, that left roughly a quarter of Midland's members in the dark.

"Our employees and board of directors are committed to our culture of safety," said Bill McKim, Midland Power's CEO. "It's a philosophy that extends throughout the co-op, from the board room to the crew rooms. This achievement was only possible because of Midland's employees.

Their dedication to service and safety is remarkable."

Midland's operations and field staff also recently completed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10 training course. The two-day class covered a variety of safety topics and served as a broad-based refresher on the most common workplace dangers. Midland Power is only the second electric cooperative in the state to have completed the course.

"We place safety at the forefront of all we do," said Chase Bachman, Midland Power's director of safety and the only OSHA-authorized

trainer working at a distribution electric co-op in the state. "The OSHA 10 course is just another example of the importance we place on keeping our employees safe. From the crews in the field to the employees in the office, safety truly is a team game. It takes everyone working together to stay safe."

Employees marked the 300,000-hour milestone and OSHA 10 course completion during a recent monthly safety meeting.

For more information and to see a brief video highlighting Midland's ongoing commitment to safety, go to [YouTube.com/MidlandPowerCoop](https://YouTube.com/MidlandPowerCoop).



## MOO-VING HOME

### Lost Lake Farm brings artisan cheesemaking to central Iowa

Nestled amongst a grove of trees, west of State Highway 69 and north of Jewell, lies Lost Lake Farm and the 20 or so grass-fed cows who call it home. Founded by Kevin and Ranae Dietzel in 2016, the family-run dairy produces small-batch, gourmet seasonal cheeses.

"We got married in 2006 and we knew we wanted to do some kind of farming," says Ranae as she stands outside her milking barn amongst her cows. "At that time we moved to upstate New York and got our first cow. We got about four gallons of milk a day. So Kevin started making cheese with that milk because it

was just way too much for people to drink."

Those early days of making cheese proved to be the inspiration for the couple whose farm consists of 80 acres, including 50 acres of pasture. Having grown up on a farm near Radcliffe, Ranae was eager to return to Iowa after studying back east.

Kevin, who grew up around cattle in Minnesota, said he developed a passion for dairy cows at a young age. To gain first-hand experience, he traveled to Germany as a young man, spending three years working on organic dairy farms, learning how to run a dairy and hone his caseiculture

(cheesemaking) skills.

"I call cheesemaking a slow art," Kevin added. "Most of the cheeses we make take a month to six months before they're ready. We call it artisan cheese and I think of myself as almost like a milk sculptor."

During the warmer summer months, Lost Lake can be found at both the Ames and Des Moines farmers' markets. Once the weather cools down, they begin shipping their cheese regionally as customers seek out the farm's unique flavors.

"You're selling something that is individual to your farm," Kevin said. "You can get mozzarella or camembert

styles, or cheddar or alpine all over the world, but you're not going to get one that tastes exactly like ours anywhere else."

Lost Lake's offerings change throughout the year, as the couple craft seasonal varieties to accompany the produce in season as well as holiday favorites. They also offer beef and whey-fed pork.

Kevin and Ranae, along with their two children, Sterling, age 11, and Scarlett, age 9, have adopted a holistic approach to farming, working to keep both their land and cows healthy.

Continued on page 2

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The Dietzel family at Lost Lake Farm north of Jewell

▶ **LOST LAKE**  
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Their unique approach is a blend of traditional animal husbandry alongside modern farming and land management practices. To highlight their philosophy, Kevin points to the way they rear calves.

“We choose to raise our calves on the cow,” says Kevin, as he strolls behind his herd through a thicket of trees leading them to their evening pasture. “Most dairy farms would have the calves come off anywhere from within the first hour to within a few days. In a grazing system like ours, it works really well to have the cows raise the calves themselves. It makes really healthy calves. We get excellent calf growth rates, we have

zero calf mortalities, and they’re all happier.”

When asked what makes the long days worthwhile, Ranae stares out across the pasture for a moment, listening to the birds and watching the tall grass sway in the evening breeze before answering. “I think what’s special about this (business) is the opportunity to take care of this piece of land,” she says. “Another part that’s really special for me is just being around the cows. Cows have personalities more similar to cats, if you imagine that they’re like 1,200 pounds and they’re much bigger and a little bit cuddly. That’s a really nice opportunity that not a lot of people get.”

More information on Lost Lake Farm can be found on their website at [LostLakeFarmLLC.com](http://LostLakeFarmLLC.com).

**Leadership Academy offers teens inside look at co-op business model**

Guided by our cooperative commitment, Midland Power Cooperative and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives are once again offering a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model.

The three-part Youth Leadership Academy series in October is open to any high school student in our service area. Registration is currently open at [IowaYouthTour.com](http://IowaYouthTour.com).

Each Zoom session will last around an hour and focus on a

specific topic:

**Thursday, Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m.** – Cooperative Business Model

**Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7:00 p.m.** – Rural Iowa Advocacy

**Thursday, Oct. 27, 7:00 p.m.** – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for two \$1,000 college scholarships. All students who register online by October 1 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

**Nelson, Krieger join team**

Midland Power recently welcomed two new employees.

**Kaitlin Nelson** joined the Midland Power team in April as a member care specialist in the Humboldt office.

A native of Iowa, Nelson grew up in Jefferson and attended Iowa State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree. She has experience in sales and marketing, and was most recently a marketing representative.

Outside of work, Nelson enjoys spending time with family and friends.

**Andy Krieger** joined Midland Power in August as the manager of community and business development. In his role, Andy will work to help attract new employers and retain and grow existing businesses within the service

area. He will also manage the cooperative's revolving loan fund and assist the cooperative's key accounts.

Andy has an extensive utility background, having joined Alliant Energy in 1999 as a meter reader and working his way up, eventually holding his most recent position as the manager of customer operations. In the position, Krieger was responsible for planning, coordinating, and scheduling gas and electric activities in his territory and the Ames zone.

A graduate of East Greene High School in Grand Junction, Krieger still resides there with his wife Mandy and their daughter Kenley.

In his spare time, Andy enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, golfing, and bowling.



Kaitlin Nelson



Andy Krieger



Congratulations to Member Care Specialist Linda Illg on 15 years of service. Linda first joined Humboldt REC in 2001. After leaving the cooperative family for a few years, she returned in 2017. Pictured here with District 2 Director Jim Byriel (left) and Midland Power CEO Bill McKim.

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S KIDS' BIKE WINNERS!**  
All three children entered to win at one of the summer member appreciation events.



Caitlyn Wanat, age 8, from Gowrie.



Wyatt Schaffer, age 11, from Algona.



Zebrine White, age 6, from Eldora.

# Smart energy tips from MPC



**ROGER HAMMEN**  
Manager of Energy Services,  
Midland Power Cooperative

With the weather starting to cool, now's the perfect time to start focusing on fall and winter energy efficiency using some of the tips below.

### Air source heat pump setting

Air source heat pumps have a switch over setting which enables the system to distinguish when to switch to the supplemental backup system. Most times, the backup system is a gas furnace.



In order to get maximum heating efficiency and energy savings from your heat pump, you will want to rely on your heat pump as much as possible. The more you can avoid higher-priced BTUs from gas, the more savings you will gain.

Compared to a conventional gas furnace and central air conditioner, a heat pump with natural gas backup may see savings of up to 27 percent. A heat pump using propane as your backup fuel source may save you up to 36 percent.

The proper switch-over setting is very important for maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the heat pump. With Energy Star® heat pumps, we recommend this setting

to be around 25 degrees (outside temperature). The switch-over setting is located in the thermostat. Some systems may also have an outside sensor as well.

It is always recommended to have your HVAC technician service your heating and cooling system on a regular basis. Have them check your switch-over setting and adjust if necessary to gain maximum efficiency and savings from your air source heat pump.

### Programmable thermostats

If you have installed a programmable thermostat, you may want to consider the benefits. If a gas heating system is your source for heat, this type of thermostat can be beneficial. However, if you have a geothermal heat pump, a programmable thermostat can be detrimental.



Geothermal systems do not react as fast as conventional systems therefore if you set the thermostat back at night and it schedules to bring back the original temperature in the morning, the geothermal cannot produce heat quickly enough to satisfy the thermostat. This will cause the backup system to come on to compensate.

Most systems have electric resistance backup that is up to three times more expensive to operate than the geothermal. The backup system will also contribute to higher electric demand.

Find a setting that is within your comfort range and leave the setting as is. This will help to keep operational cost down and will aid in demand reduction.

### Gas vs. electric

As we know, natural gas and propane costs have risen dramatically. It is believed that shortcomings in fossil fuels will cause higher pricing to stick around for some time.

Propane and natural gas pricing have increased well over 50 percent in the last year. By contrast, electricity from Midland Power increased by less than four percent since 2017. This shows stability in long-term costs and enables our members to invest in highly-efficient, economical equipment for heating and cooling.

Heat pumps make great sense instead of conventional central air conditioners, as they are extremely efficient and economical. Most systems will likely qualify for our reduced heating and cooling rate structure as well.

Rebates are also available for highly-efficient heat pump systems.

### Water heating

As a Midland Power member, you can purchase a Marathon electric water heater from us at a greatly reduced member price. The water heater must be installed on Midland Power electric lines.



Marathons come with a lifetime warranty on the tank for leaks and a six year warranty on parts. These water heaters perform most efficiently at the factory preset temperature of 120 degrees.

Most energy loss from a water heater is from the first three feet on the outgoing (hot) water line from the tank.

It is recommended that insulation be applied to this area to retain that heat and push it down the line to the destination. You will also want to consider draining and flushing the tank on any water heater every year or two to keep maximum functionality and longevity.

### Community Solar

Did you know that Midland Power offers a Community Solar Program? Instead of investing in a personal solar array that comes with equipment costs, taxes, depreciation, and parts replacement, you can purchase subscriptions to our program.

Simply put, you can offset your usage from solar without experiencing the upfront and reoccurring costs of owning a system.



Many members have found that this is a hassle-free and economical way to play a part in renewable energy production and energy savings.

These are just a few examples of how Midland Power can help you, our member-owners, become more energy-efficient and conscious.

We strive to be your source for information about smart energy consumption and changes in technology.

## 2022-2023 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### ATTENTION: RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?

The 2022-2023 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season.

The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply, Dial 2-1-1, or visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply> to contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP  
Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Capitol Complex  
Des Moines, IA 50319

INCOME MAXIMUMS	
Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$27,180
2	\$36,620
3	\$46,060
4	\$55,500
5	\$64,940
6	\$74,380
7	\$83,820
8	\$93,260

For households with more than eight members, add \$9,440 for each additional member.

#### WHEN TO APPLY:

- **Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled:** October 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023
- **All other households:** November 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023

#### WHAT TO TAKE:

- **Proof of Income** (for all household members age 18 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- **Proof of Social Security Numbers for all household members** (documentation required)
- **Most recent heat bill**
- **Most recent electric bill**

#### WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

#### FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

#### SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

**If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified. Additional income not listed here may be required.**

## Winter heat rate returns in October

What better way to take advantage of energy-efficient heating and cooling systems than to participate in Midland Power's heat rate program? Members that take advantage of this program, by utilizing a second electric meter for their home's electric heating and cooling system, receive electricity for their heating and cooling at a discounted rate! Whole house geothermal heat pumps, air source heat pumps and resistance heating systems typically qualify.

October electric consumption, which is billed in November, marks the return of the winter rate – less than 6 cents per kilowatt-hour – and runs through the end of April. The summer rate runs from May through September and is around ten cents per kilowatt-hour.

Learn more about heat pumps below and check out [MidlandPower.Coop/HeatPumps](https://MidlandPower.Coop/HeatPumps) for additional information. If you have questions about whether a heat pump is right for you, give the co-op a call at (800) 833-8876.



Adia Low picks fresh raspberries from the garden's berry patch

# SHINING BRIGHT

## Eldora Community Garden wins Iowa Shine the Light award

Stepping through the trellis archway into the Eldora Community Garden is a bit like stepping into a different world.

The lush grounds, filled with blooming flowers, bountiful vegetables, and giggling children stand in contrast to the surrounding residential neighborhood. Crouched amidst the squash blossoms and visiting butterflies, Nicole Low, one of the garden's co-founders, can be found pulling weeds and picking vegetables.

Low, who helped start the garden in 2019, was recently named one of three Iowa Shine the Light award winners, earning the garden a \$2,000 grant in her name. Sponsored by the Touchstone Cooperatives of Iowa, Shine the Light recognizes volunteers around the state making a positive difference in their communities.

Last year, the garden grew and donated more than 9,000 pounds of produce to the local food pantry and area residents. The garden also serves as a community focal point, providing a place to gather and learn about nature, gardening, and nutrition.

Low's passion for eating healthy and combating food insecurity gave rise to the Eldora Community Garden, an ambitious project Low tackled head-on.

"My friend and I started getting into more healthy eating, and started growing our own food in our backyards," Low said. "We thought it would be more fun to do it with the community. As a nurse, I have a strong passion for public health. I know it's hard for people who struggle financially to pay for fruits and vegetables. I just thought, we live on some of the most fertile Iowa soil, and why not use that to grow food for our neighbors?"

The garden, which sits northeast of downtown Eldora at 787 4th Street, is two-thirds of an acre and comprised of both leased plots as well as the donation garden. Food harvested is



Top: Co-founder Nicole Low and volunteer Lynda Strait harvest green beans. Bottom left: Paul Lawler picks vegetables for the Pine Lake Food Shelf. Bottom right: District 4 directors Jack Runge (left) and Tom Ingebritson (right) present Low with a \$2,000 prize check for the garden.

donated to the Pine Lake Food Shelf, given away to the garden's visitors, or set out in front of the garden on their food stand, allowing residents to stop by and pick up produce whenever it's convenient.

"Our motto here is 'take what you need and give what you can,'" Low said. "It's very much solidarity with our community, rather than just charity."

In its second year, the statewide Shine the Light contest invited member-owners and employees of Iowa's locally-owned electric cooperatives to nominate deserving volunteers in their communities. Low was nominated by Paul Lawler

of Union, who is a Midland Power Cooperative member and has been an active volunteer at the garden since its inception.

"(Nicole) has been so involved with the Eldora community. She's taken the lead and said, 'OK, let's do this.' She doesn't give up until it's all done, and when it's all done, she will start all over again," Lawler said. "She's just a fabulous person and very energetic!"

Reflecting on the garden's growing success, Low is quick to point out the support the garden receives from the community.

"I definitely couldn't do this alone," offers Low. "It's been a true community

effort. A lot of those volunteers have no personal, vested interest in the garden for their own food. It's just to help out the community and to help the mission of the garden."

Across the state, nearly 70 volunteers were nominated, highlighting the work of many incredible Iowans.

More information on the Shine the Light program can be found at [IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com).

To learn more about the Eldora Community Garden, visit [EldoraIowa.com/Eldora-Community-Garden](http://EldoraIowa.com/Eldora-Community-Garden) or visit our YouTube page at [YouTube.com/MidlandPowerCoop](http://YouTube.com/MidlandPowerCoop) to watch a brief video about the garden.

### Midland Power Cooperative Offices

Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- 📍 2005 S. Story Street, Boone, Iowa
- 📍 1210 13th Street North, Humboldt, Iowa
- 📍 1001 E. Lincoln Way, Jefferson, Iowa

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