



# Rural Power

Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

Energizing rural  
economic growth

## Iowa Rural Power Candidate Questionnaire

***Candidates can provide answers via video message, "op-ed" style submission, or another written form of response. Responses will be shared in their entirety with the member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives and posted on [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).***

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Examples of questions most relevant to our members are:

1. How much interaction do you have with electric cooperatives in Iowa?

I have met with Greg Proctor of Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative in Bloomfield, attended their annual meeting and also board meetings in the past. I have also met with other Southeast Iowa electric cooperative directors and members at the capital and on their legislative days. I am also a member of a rural electric cooperative in Oklahoma servicing my parent's property, which I now own.

2. How will your energy plans provide affordable and reliable power to rural Iowa?

Iowa has been on the forefront of providing renewable energy sources to our state with wind, and solar as well as ethanol and biodiesel. However, we know that we need to have a continual source of electricity as a base load. We do have a nuclear power plant in Palo, but we are rapidly losing the engineering capabilities both at our research and educational institutions as well as within our workforce, as this carbon neutral source of energy has not been supported. I will continue to support initiatives that promote wind and solar, but also nuclear energy and cleaner sources of coal and natural gas. Given our agricultural economy and our research at Iowa State University, we also have tremendous opportunities for carbon sequestration, such as bio-char, which can also help to improve the soil as well as reduce CO2.

3. Iowa's electric cooperatives are successful proponents of renewable energy resources in our state. However, obstacles remain for shifting to a 100% renewable portfolio, such as extreme weather patterns, source intermittency, and limits on battery storage technology. Simply put, how will your energy plan compensate for electricity needs in February when the sun isn't shining, the wind isn't blowing, and battery storage options are limited due to their current performance in colder temperatures?

Weather patterns and sourcing intermittency are obstacles for both wind and solar energy. Additionally, large solar panel installations that occupy usable farmland are also a concern. We do need to address environmental concerns when it comes to disposition of both wind blades, wind turbines and solar panels when they are no longer functional. This has yet to be addressed when we consider renewable energy.

Source intermittency or a continual baseload, is not provided by wind and solar and continues to be a problem. We have made advances in storage capacity with batteries. Tesla is on the forefront of

this. Ideal Energy in Fairfield has been able to partner with Agri-Plastics to provide solar energy to redo start intermittent peaks with the Tesla battery storage. It's also interesting research that has been renewed with hydrogen fuel cells, which once paired with our agricultural economy, could make tremendous advances. Hydrogen fuel cells seem to have been abandoned about 15 years ago but this technology is making a resurgence.

To power our economy, manufacturing, businesses, farms and residences, we need to continue to promote clean sources of coal and natural gas while working towards storage options for current renewable sources such as wind and solar and research and development and two other clean energy options for the future.

4. Co-ops across the country are able to deliver electric service to rural areas in part due to low-cost financing from the USDA's Rural Utilities Service. Allowing borrowers to refinance RUS debt would help make up for the expected \$10 billion loss nationwide due to COVID-19 and allow essential rural utilities to be a part of the long-term recovery for our members-consumers. It is estimated that \$200 million dollars in savings would be realized in Iowa alone. If elected, would you support or cosponsor the Flexible Financing for Rural America Act (H.R. 7483/S. 4152) to allow borrowers to refinance their RUS loans without penalty?

I would be happy to work with Representative Vicky Hartzler of Missouri who has sponsored this legislation to work with her to further this legislation through Congress.

5. Iowa co-ops pride themselves on being champions for their community and leaders in economic development. Through the Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG) through the USDA, electric co-ops have helped bring millions of dollars in investment to rural Iowa. How will you work to strengthen the REDLG program in the next Farm Bill and beyond?

Economic development in rural southeast Iowa is extremely important to me. At the state level, I worked diligently to help promote Future Ready Iowa, expanded broadband into rural areas and advocated for REC's to compete for these grants. With other members of the legislature both in Iowa and other rural states, I will work to help strengthen the grant program so that we can continue to advance economic development in our area. I also have very good relationships with the Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Naig, and within the USDA which will help us promote rural Iowa's concerns.

6. What other ideas on strengthening rural Iowa, such as support for the biofuels industry, are unique to your campaign that would be of interest to electric cooperative member-consumers?

I strongly support bio fuel and ethanol, as well as new product lines for Iowa agriculture and carbon sequestration that can be utilized for renewable energy sources.

Also, I worked as a state senator to expand broadband to rural areas which has been under scored through this pandemic as a necessity for tele-health, tele-work, and tele-learning.

We need to expand broadband to create opportunities for people to relocate to rural areas and expand economic opportunities in conjunction with promoting our Future Ready Iowa programs, community colleges and skills training and apprenticeships both for our agriculture and manufacturing businesses here in Southeast Iowa.

*Please email candidate responses to Haley Moon ([hmoon@iowarec.org](mailto:hmoon@iowarec.org)).*