



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.

Examples of questions most relevant to our members are:

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

Our campaign has met with several electric cooperatives as we have toured the district over the course of the past 4 years. We've listened to the great stories of investments from community members and the reinvestments that cooperatives make in their communities. We've also listened to the challenges faced by these cooperatives like the need to maintain and update existing infrastructure, and recruiting, training and maintaining a skilled workforce, just to name a few.

The biggest takeaways have been that above all else, we need to support our local energy cooperatives, and help them expand and improve by providing adequate funding and resources to programs that help them succeed.

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

We must have an all of the above approach when it comes to powering rural America. While it's great to see more rural co-ops diversify their electric generation portfolios, we have to maintain a dynamic approach that consists of traditional power generation coupled with an ever-expanding inclusion of new and inventive means of energy production.

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?

From a technology perspective, there's no question that we have not reached a point where renewable energy sources can adequately fulfill all of our energy needs. The most important thing, when it comes to these important issues, is listening to the people who know how it works. That means developing policies based on best practices that have been established through years of expertise in the field, including leaders from RECs in the policy making process and delivering what our communities need.

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?

Yes, of course I would support this legislation. This is a common sense, bipartisan bill that, through loan modification and interest rate adjustments, provides much needed relief for our Rural Electric Cooperatives.

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?

The first step is securing a seat on the House Agriculture Committee. This will put Iowa's 4th Congressional District back in the discussion about the crucial policies that affect our communities. With regard to the REDLG program, throughout the time I've spent meeting with voters and workers across the district, I've heard about the benefits that the program provides. It was great to see the 2018 Farm Bill extend REDLG beyond 2021 but of course we can always push for more. Any program focused on creating and maintaining good paying jobs in rural communities should be funded to the greatest extent possible.

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?

One of the last things my Grandma Fern said to me before she passed away was to take care of the family farm. This ultimately led me to run for Congress — to not just protect our family farm, but all Iowa farmers and rural communities.

Iowa's 4th district is the 2nd most agriculture producing district in the nation. Just like my ancestors, our farmers work hard to make an honest living to feed, clothe, and power all of our communities. But despite living around some of the best land in the world, many farmers are struggling to get by.

For years, politicians on both sides of the aisle have prioritized corporate profits and efficiency over resiliency and fairness. The result has made our food system unfair, unsustainable, and unstable through policies like “get big or get off the farm,” corporate consolidation, and the rise of Dollar Generals undercutting our independent small grocers. Big mergers, market consolidation, and foreign influence and ownership of our Ag industries have also hindered the power and opportunities of family farmers. And of course, we must continue to support the biofuels industry.

Please email candidate responses to Haley Moon (hmoon@iowarec.org).