

In the case of natural disasters, municipal utilities are entitled to a state match during FEMA-declared disaster to help repair damage to electric lines and infrastructure. Co-ops have access to state funds, but only through an application process with their county office that is not guaranteed. What role should the state play in helping rural electric co-ops turn the lights back on after natural disasters?

Gruenhagen: On natural disasters, I would support co-ops going directly to a state match and not having to go through an application process at the county level. Co-ops should be treated equally with municipality utilities and not discriminated against when natural disasters happen in order to restore electricity to our rural farms and businesses as quickly as possible.

Lipke: From my experience all legislators come together in times of disaster to help with infrastructure based on damage and need. I think for the most part they do a good job in serving as a safety net in times of disaster. If you as a cooperative feel the need for greater attention in this area I would certainly bring your concerns to the table.