

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Powering economic development

To encourage that growth, we participate in the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) loan programs. Through the USDA we offer a low-interest revolving loan for business start-ups or expansions and are also part of their intermediary relending program.

We have loaned to fire departments, grocery stores, schools, daycare providers, municipal development corporations, health organizations and manufacturers, to name a few. And we loan to people and businesses to whom we don't provide power. This has meant countless jobs for members and nonmembers and, by extension, revenue for local businesses when people purchase from them.

Rick Whalen, our economic development director, says of the loan programs, "They are essential in developing industrial parks, helping businesses expand and creating jobs."

In addition to the loan programs, we serve power to six industrial parks—Butler Logistics Park, Shell Rock; Fairbank Industrial Park; Fredericksburg Industrial Park; Greene Industrial Park; New Hampton Industrial Park; and Sumner Industrial Park. The parks are beneficial in that they bring development to the community. As Rick says, "Communities have to be proactive. If they don't have a park, it limits their development."

Often, the industrial park will house speculative (spec) buildings. The communities of Fredericksburg, Greene, Shell Rock and Sumner built spec buildings and all are occupied. The buildings are an investment because every year they are worth a little more. Rick says the benefit of a spec building is that often a business doesn't have time to build so the owners are looking for a building, not land. It is an advantage to the communities with spec buildings to be able to show a building that only needs to be customized.

At Butler County REC, we are invested in our members' lives and in the communities they call home. That's why we are committed to economic development—to help our members and their communities succeed.

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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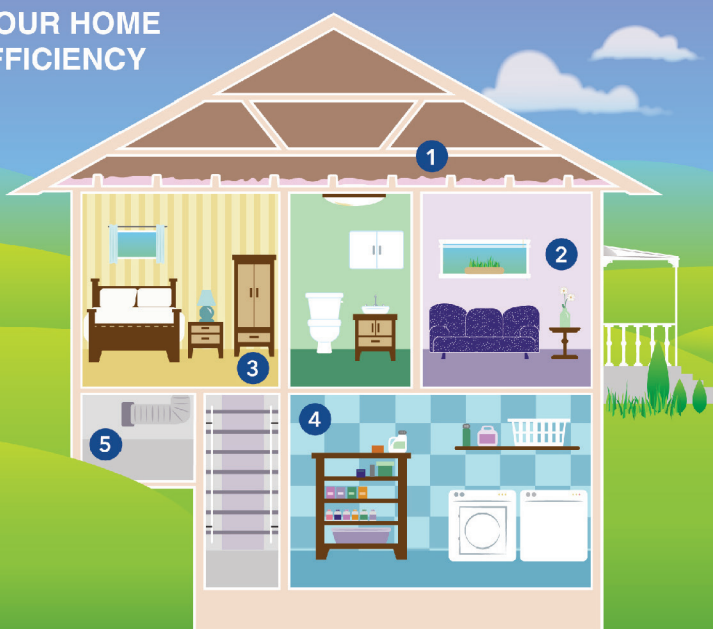
Working to earn money to pay bills, buy necessities and go on vacation—or even just a night out. It's important to people. So is being able to drive a reasonable distance to their job.

At Butler County REC, one of our values is Commitment to Community. One way we honor that commitment is by helping with economic development growth in our area. Economic development improves the quality of our members' lives through local jobs and added tax revenues.

INSULATING YOUR HOME TO LOCK IN EFFICIENCY AND SAVINGS

Adding insulation in the areas shown here may be the best way to improve your home's energy efficiency. Insulate either the attic floor or under the roof. Check with a licensed contractor about crawl space or basement insulation.

- 1 Attic
- 2 Walls
- 3 Floors
- 4 Basement
- 5 Crawlspace



Source: Dept. of Energy

Drafty home?

Now is the time to be thinking about sealing your home for winter. And we have rebates to help with the cost of materials, whether you're insulating your ceilings, foundation or walls.

Metered electric heat

40% of cost, \$600 max/year

Nonelectric heat, central air

20% of cost, \$300 max/year

Contact us today at
888.267.2726 to learn
more!

Join us at the polls on Nov. 6



Our co-op's number one priority is providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Not only does this require stringing and maintaining power lines, it requires political engagement.

That's why we're participating in a national program of America's electric cooperatives called Co-ops Vote.

Co-ops Vote encourages all co-op members to participate in national, state and local elections while educating political candidates and elected officials about the important role of electric cooperatives.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing the nation's electric co-ops, launched Co-ops Vote in 2016 as a non-partisan get-out-the-vote initiative that helped drive rural voter turnout in the presidential election.

Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the electric cooperative family has put into political engagement. When we are all involved, we can make things happen.

Our participation in Co-ops Vote helps to ensure that rural issues remain part of the national discussion—and are supported by our elected officials.

You can participate by registering to vote and committing to cast your ballot on Nov. 6. If you're interested in getting more involved, just give us a call or visit www.vote.coop to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Election Day!

Helping members in need

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative has always extended a helping hand to those needing it. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of members helping members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

You may make a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your electric bill—even just a dollar a month—or a one-time contribution to help others.



Be safe when you light up the night on Halloween



Christmas is no longer the only holiday that we bring out lights and yard decorations to show our festive spirit. Halloween has become a time to string up lights, plug in

fog machines, light up those electric powered decorations and create a yard that is scare-worthy to any trick-or-treater that may stop by.

Safe Electricity offers these tips to make your Halloween safe and fun:

- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration for cracking, fraying or bare wires.
- Replace any damaged decorations.
- Make sure any lights, animated displays or other electrical outdoor products are Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved and marked for outdoor use.
- Follow the care and instructions that accompany your electrical decorations.
- Don't overload extension cords or allow them to run through water on the ground.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into outlets protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways.
- Turn off all electrical decorations and lights before leaving home or going to sleep.
- When decorating outside, always make sure to look up and check that you and any equipment, such as ladders, are at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

RECare Consumer Authorization Form

- I will contribute \$_____ per month. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will make a one-time contribution of \$_____ to RECare. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Account Number _____

Return to your local
Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

Cooperatives see the future

Dramatic changes are transforming the energy industry. Luckily, your cooperative is uniquely positioned to meet these changing energy needs because we are a cooperative.

Co-ops are community-led

October is National Co-op Month, the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique.

Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their members.

Electric cooperatives belong to the communities they serve. This heightened community focus allows us to quickly adapt to evolving member expectations. Our closeness to the community ensures a better response to these needs because we are led by the people that we serve.

Co-ops are a catalyst for good

Co-ops engage their members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 75 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their members.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op.

The co-op business model is unique. It is mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice. Co-ops have earned that trust because they always have their members' best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve.



SAFE,
RELIABLE,
AFFORDABLE
ENERGY.

THEN. NOW.
ALWAYS.

We are proud to
power your life.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility



Technology breaches—think customer credit card data being stolen from Target, or consumer data being stolen from Experian—have become more commonplace. Our new reality is increased security measures and constant monitoring of organizational and personal data to ensure our identities, credit card numbers or bank accounts have not been compromised.

This has made many realize that keeping systems secure is everyone's responsibility to keep critical personal and organizational data safe.

It can seem a little overwhelming at times, and the idea that the next threat is always lurking around

the corner can be stressful. But there are things you can do to protect your personal data.

Keep your defenses up

- Keep your computer software updated with the latest software to ensure security patches can succeed in blocking security threats.
- Create a strong password and keep it private—it could take up to two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more.
- Treat all Wi-Fi networks as a potential security risk. Never check financial or other sensitive accounts when using public Wi-Fi.

Don't fall for a phish

- Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to get to secure data. Trust your instinct.
- Don't click on links or attached files in emails or text

messages from senders you don't know. Even if you do know the sender, hover over the link before you click as they may have been hacked or someone could be spoofing them. There are many ways to spot a phish. Visit staysafeonline.org.

Co-ops are working together

Electric co-ops—with the Department of Energy and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)—are working together, through the RC3 Program, to better protect us from security threats. From the smallest co-op with limited access to technology staff to the largest co-op with greater resources, NRECA and America's electric cooperatives are creating a co-op network that fosters a culture of cybersecurity. Keeping your information safe is a top priority for your cooperative.

Remember: When keeping data safe, you are the first line of defense against cybersecurity threats.

Additional electric heat rebate available

We are now offering an additional \$100/ton rebate for members installing an air source heat pump who also have an automatic gas backup. To qualify, a load control agreement must be signed allowing us to control the heat pump during systemwide peak energy demand.

“Installing a heat pump with an automatic gas backup allows members to switch heating sources to the most economical at the time,” says Matt Mahoney, Butler County REC energy services manager. “With the load control agreement for air source heat pumps, the members receive the benefit of the efficiencies of a heat pump and it helps the co-op to possibly lower energy demand on the system.”

To learn more, contact Mike Boomgarden, energy service advisor, at 888.267.2726.



Air source heat pump rebates

SEER 14.5-14.9 - \$400 per unit SEER 16+ - \$600 per unit

SEER 15.0-15.9 - \$500 per unit \$50 per ton for all units and an additional \$100 per ton* for automatic gas backup

Two units maximum per single-family dwelling or outbuilding. One rebate maximum per family in multi-family dwelling.

*Total of \$150 per ton for members installing an air source heat pump who also have an automatic gas backup

Do You Know... SmartHub?

Our online bill pay option is so much more than an online bill pay option.

SmartHub offers our members:

- **Payment scheduling** that notifies our billing department that you have scheduled your payment
- **Automatic bill payment** management—sign up or make changes
- **New bill notification**—over 1,200 notifications were sent out after our last billing cycle
- **Usage and billing history**—daily and monthly
- **Contact Us** option with a drop-down menu for issues such as billing, rebates, security light maintenance, as well as other topics
- **An app** for iOS and Android
- **Website access:** butler-rec.coop
As always, call us at 888.267.2726 if you have questions.



Lighting Labels and Lingo

These days, consumers have endless options when it comes to purchasing light bulbs, but the labels can be confusing! Use the information below as a helpful guide for browsing bulbs.

Lighting Facts

Per Bulb	
Brightness	655 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.08
Based on 3 hrs/day 11¢/kWh Cost depends on rates and use	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3 hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Warm ————— Cool	
2700 K	
Energy Used	9 watts

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



Read the Label

Under the Energy Labeling Rule, all light bulb manufacturers are required to give consumers key, easy-to-understand information on bulb efficiency. Take advantage of the Lighting Facts label, which gives you the information you need to buy the most energy-efficient bulb to meet your lighting needs. The label includes information on the bulb's **brightness, energy cost, life, light appearance and energy used** (wattage).

Save Energy

Bulbs are available in many shapes and sizes to fit your home's needs. Choosing more efficient bulbs can help reduce energy consumption and save you money!

- LEDs use 25%-30% of the energy and last eight to 25 times longer than halogen incandescent bulbs.
- Purchase ENERGY STAR-rated bulbs to maximize energy efficiency.

Buy Lumens, not Watts

Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption.

Tip: To replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that produces about 1,600 lumens.



Incandescent
100 watt
1,600 lumens



LED
14 - 20 watt
1,600 lumens

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