

## Butler County REC returns \$1,023,699.39 to members

Patronage distribution from member-owned not-for-profit utilities, like Butler County REC, are similar to the dividends investor-owned utilities pay to their shareholders. The difference is that the cooperative's "shareholders" are you, the members, and the "dividends" are distributed to YOU.

Before distributing patronage, your board of directors considers the financial condition of the cooperative, and then determines the portion of margins (patronage allocation) to be refunded.

Butler County REC returns patronage on a 19-year cycle. However, our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, is also retiring a portion of the patronage Butler County REC was allocated in 2018.

For 2020, your board of directors authorized a patronage distribution of \$1,023,699.39 for 2001 and Corn Belt's portion of 2018. Members purchasing electricity in 2001 and/or 2018 are receiving patronage for those years. The amount you receive is based on how much electricity you purchased during those two years and was credited to your power bill mailed in February 2020.

Checks have been mailed to qualifying members no longer receiving service from Butler County REC.

### Nominating committee selects candidates for board

The nominating committee of Butler County REC, duly appointed by the board of directors and consisting of Wayne Jansen, Robert Kepple, and Kathy Bruns, met Dec. 23, 2019. They nominated the cooperative members listed below for the office of director for the ensuing term of three years each. The election will take place at the annual meeting to be held Saturday, March 28.

#### To represent the west half of Floyd County

- Gerald Schmitt (incumbent), Rockford

#### To represent the east half of Floyd County

- Leland Boyd (incumbent), Charles City
- Scott Andrews, Charles City

#### To represent the northwest quarter of Butler County

- Tim Schrage (incumbent), Allison

Candidate information will be mailed to members with the March electric bills and will be online at [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop).

**Attend your co-op's annual meeting on March 28 at the North Butler Elementary School in Allison.**



*Left to right: Robert Kepple, Wayne Jansen, and Kathy Bruns*

## Youth Tour deadline approaching

**High school juniors** whose parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn are invited to apply for the **FREE** 2020 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 18-25. The deadline to apply is March 9.

Attendees will visit monuments and memorials, the White House, the capitol, and a number of other sites. The top three applicants will be interviewed for an opportunity to go on the trip and will each receive a **\$500 scholarship**.

**For more information, visit [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop) or contact us at 319.267.2726.**





## We love our communities

“To move forward, you have to give back.” This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation that ties your electric cooperative to the communities we serve. Because it’s February, we can’t think of a better time to express how much we love serving you and your community.

When we helped to bring electricity to rural Iowa many years ago, quality of life improved. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront, helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of your community to ensure it continues to thrive.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy, equally important is our mission to enrich your life. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. We understand that electricity is a critical need, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet your changing needs, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that means many different things. It means programs for Iowa’s youth, such as education scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. It means donating time and resources to community programs.

Our community-focused programs and other giving projects have helped build fire stations, fed hungry families, enabled those in need to keep the lights on, and so much more – and we couldn’t do any of this without you.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to the communities we serve. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. Working together, we can continue to do good things.

### Help keep lineworkers safe

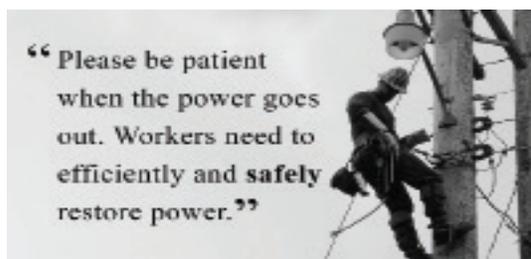
It’s nearing 5 p.m. on a workday. Your boss wanted that last-minute report and your kids need to be picked up. You jump in your car and on the way you approach a work zone. You don’t have time to slow down so you rush through it and ignore the orange work zone signs.

You’re having a garage sale and you think posting a sign on a utility pole won’t hurt. Everyone does it, right?

But either of these scenarios could injure or kill one of our lineworkers.

The job of an electric lineworker is not easy. Lineworkers take great pride in providing safe and reliable service, but their job involves working on and around live power out in the elements. We ask you to do your part to keep them safe:

- 1. Slow down and move over in work zones.** Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground but can also put a lineworker working high up in a bucket in danger by causing it to move or sway.
- 2. Do not post anything on a utility pole,** especially with staples, nails, or tacks. These can puncture insulated gloves or other protective clothing and expose workers to high voltages.
- 3. Never plug a generator into any wall outlet.** The power that back feeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker.



**We appreciate your help in keeping our employees safe.**

### 2020 rebate changes

On April 1, 2020, we will be adjusting the following rebates:

- **Central Air:** > SEER 15 \$50/unit; > SEER 16 \$100/unit
- **Lighting:** We will no longer rebate CFL bulbs or T8 or T5 fixtures. We will rebate LED bulbs and fixtures for retrofit only, not new homes or structures.
- **Water Heaters:** We will no longer rebate solar water heaters. In addition, low-flow shower heads and sink aerators will not be given to members purchasing a water heater.

Remember that we have added an EV charger rebate and an additional \$100/ton to the air source rebate if you install automatic gas backup (subject to future load control). Contact us to discuss rebate opportunities.

## RURAL Act signed into law

In December, President Trump signed into law the RURAL Act, protecting more than 900 electric cooperatives throughout the nation from the risk of losing their tax-exempt status when they accept government grants for disaster relief, broadband service, and other programs that benefit co-op members.

The RURAL Act was a top legislative priority for cooperatives in 2019 because of the profound threat to the business model of not-for-profit co-ops. Tens of thousands of co-op leaders, employees, and members across the country rallied to advocate passage of the bill.

Lawmakers passed the popular bipartisan legislation in the final hours of the 2019 session as part of a larger tax and spending bill that funds the government through September 2020.

The bill's passage fixes a problem created in 2017 when Congress passed



the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which redefined government grants to co-ops as income rather than capital. That change made it difficult for many co-ops to abide by the 15% limit on non-member income to keep their tax-exempt status. The RURAL Act once again exempts grants from being counted as income and is retroactive to the 2018 tax year.

Without the fix, some co-ops would have had to start paying taxes this spring after receiving grants in 2018 or 2019 to repair storm damage, bring high-speed internet to rural communities, or invest in renewable energy and energy-efficiency programs. Many co-op leaders feared they would have to raise rates for members to pay the new taxes.



## Save energy in home office

More people are working from their homes instead of commuting to offices. If you're one of them, consider these energy-efficient features for your home office:

- If you will be away from work for more than two hours, shut down your computer. Turn it off when you're finished for the day.
- Enable the power management features on your computer. These are the features that automatically put your computer into standby mode when it's not in use.
- Shut off printers, copiers, scanners, and other large equipment when they are not in use. Plug them into one power strip to shut them off with one flick of the switch. If you often forget to turn them off, use a power strip with a timer to power down each night.
- When buying new equipment, look for the Energy Star label on all computers and printers. Choose equipment that performs more than one operation—like a printer that also scans and copies, for instance. You'll have fewer devices to plug into the wall.
- Though you may be home all day, it's a waste to heat the whole house when you are spending time in only one room. Instead, lower your home's thermostat and use a portable space heater just for your office while you're working.

Contact your Touchstone Energy cooperative for more energy-saving ideas. We're here to help!

**PILLOW TALK SAFETY**

Taking your cell phone to bed with you can do a lot more harm than interfere with your sleep.

For more information, visit:

**Safe Electricity.org**

# Oltmann retires after 43 years

Crew Chief Jon Oltmann credits his 43-year Butler County REC career to the annual cooperative Youth Tour to Washington D.C. “The Youth Tour is the only reason I worked here,” said Oltmann.

After attending the 1975 Youth Tour, Oltmann was hired for on-the-job training at the REC through Allison-Bristow High School in Allison. He worked in the appliance department filing work orders and counting inventory. After high school graduation, he joined the brush crew and just a few months later became a lineman. Oltmann was on-call his first night as an REC lineman.



For almost three decades, Oltmann’s workday didn’t end at 3:30 p.m. He went home to his second job as a “full-time, part-time farmer,” farming at his home and then adding his dad’s ground later. His livestock includes cows, calves, and mules. As if that’s not enough, he also plants corn and soybeans. When discussing his after-hours position, Oltmann said, “It will be nice to do stuff during the day, instead of at night and on weekends.”

Jon is looking forward to dropping the “part-time” status and farming full-time. An avid fisherman, he also plans to “go north a lot” and enjoy the cabin in Canada he and his wife Diane purchased last year.

Jon and Diane have two children. Jessie of Aplington, who works at the Iowa Falls hospital, and Josh of Guthrie Center, a 16-year lineman. They also have three grandchildren, Colton, Caylee, and Cora.

Congratulations, Jon—you will be missed!



Our Christmas tree showcasing employee donations.

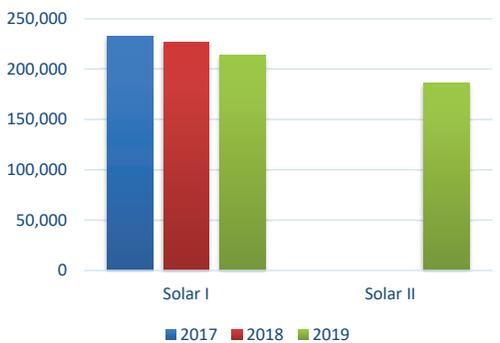
## REC employees donate to those in need

One of our seven cooperative principles is Commitment to Community, and this past holiday season Butler County REC employees demonstrated that with their generous spirits.

Employees donated hats, mittens, and food for those in need and also raised \$400 during a raffle.

The money raised was combined with donations from the cooperative board and Corn Belt Power Cooperative for a total of \$1,025. These funds are being divided between food banks in the county seats of the four counties we serve: Bremer County—Bremer County Community Action, Butler County—Allison Food Pantry, Chickasaw County—Chickasaw County Food Pantry, and Floyd County—Food Box Messiah.

### Our Solar Array Production



*Kilowatt-hour production for Solar I, online in January of 2017, and Solar II, online in April of 2019. Over its lifetime, Solar I has produced enough energy to power 2,643 single-family homes for seven days. Solar II has produced enough energy to power 761 single-family homes for seven days.*

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