

AS THE YEAR CAME TO A CLOSE, WE TOOK A MOMENT TO LOOK BACK ON 2019 AT BUTLER COUNTY REC

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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1. No lost-time accidents.
2. Employee donations of almost \$400 were combined with the board and Corn Belt Power Cooperative donations for a total of \$1,490 for items for the pediatric units at the hospitals in Charles City, New Hampton, Sumner, and Waverly.
3. Members were paid over \$762,000 in patronage.
4. Two directors earned Director Gold Renewal Certifications through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).
5. One director earned a Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate through NRECA.
6. Employees donated over 1,200 hours of personal time volunteering.
7. Line crews rebuilt 22.5 miles of line.
8. Thirteen employees were recognized for years of service—from five to 40 years.
9. Solar II was energized.
10. Over 70 members contributed to RECare, our program of members helping members pay heating bills.
11. Over 250 work orders were completed by the line crew.
12. The line crew was dispatched fewer than 90 times after hours.
13. Zach White, Joel Noelting, and Tyler Retterath, apprentice linemen, joined Butler County REC.
14. Over 70 load control receivers were installed on electric water heaters to manage electric use during peak demand times, for a total of over 340.
15. Morgan Biretz, Fairbank, represented Butler County REC on the Youth Tour to Washington D.C.
16. 940 likes on our Facebook page.
17. TrinityRail Maintenance Services broke ground in Butler Logistics Park, Shell Rock. We added 11 temporary services for their use. The company plans to employ over 250 people in over 350,000 square feet of building.
18. Loaned economic development funds to seven businesses.
19. An additional substation was built at Flint Hills Resources in the Butler Logistics Park.
20. Board approved a rate adjustment. Energy costs and the energy cost adjustment declined for our members, along with an increase in the monthly facility charge to help ensure members are paying the costs necessary to serve them.
21. Members passed amendments to our Articles: 1) allowing mail-in ballots for director positions and 2) expanding language describing board director eligibility requirements.
22. Mark Siefken retired after 44 years of service to our members.
23. \$2,482,958.43 in margins were allocated. These margins will be used to help keep your cooperative financially sound and the quality of service as high as possible.
24. Jeff Sherburne, 22-year employee, passed away.
25. AVEKA Manufacturing, Fredericksburg, was the recipient of an Iowa Area Development Group Venture Award, recognizing existing Iowa companies for their significant contributions to Iowa's economy.
26. Phishing campaign and risk and vulnerability assessments performed on our computer systems by National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services, a division of the Department of Homeland Security.
27. Improved transparency on our website with the addition of enhanced information regarding board and voting, our energy mix information, and understanding your bill.

We look forward to the new year and serving our members. May 2020 be your best year yet.

High school juniors: Win a trip to Washington, D.C.!

High school juniors: If your parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn, you are eligible for a FREE week-long trip to Washington D.C. June 18-25. If you are chosen as one of the top three applicants to be interviewed, you will also receive a **\$500 SCHOLARSHIP**. Visit butlerrec.coop or contact us at 319.267.2726 for an application!



Three 2020 DIY efficiency projects

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy—and money. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save.

Trim dryer vent *Level of difficulty: easy.*

Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape, and masking tape. Estimated cost: about \$25.

The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line. If it doesn't, measure, mark, and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent.

Seal air leaks *Level of difficulty: moderate.*

Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated cost: \$25 to \$50.

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10 to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring, and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors.

Insulate attic stairs opening *Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$100.*

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home. But even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening.

You can build an insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. If your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, be sure to contact us.



Make the most of your clothes dryer by ensuring an appropriate vent hose length. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup.



Image by Jan Vašek from Pixabay

We want to hear from you

We live in a device-driven world, constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening?

At your cooperative, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with your priorities and needs.

We exist to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of our members. We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but also as a local business that supports and powers economic development and prosperity for your community.

From our annual meeting of the members to conducting surveys, we want to interact with you and hear your thoughts.

We are in the midst of significant changes, as technology and interest in renewables and a more balanced energy mix are impacting long-term planning. This is why it's so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course.

We work to continually learn from our members about your priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt, and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

Connect with us and let us know your perspective.

On average, how much will it cost to run two 1,500-watt space heaters this winter?

Number of Space Heaters



Hours per day



Cents Per kWh

\$0.110



Cost per month

\$79.20

Why is my power out?

We don't like it when the power goes out just as much as you don't like it. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as safely and quickly as possible.

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

1. *Storms*—High winds, ice, and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can also cause a problem if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer.
2. *Trees and vegetation*—Branches, limbs, or trunks can fall on lines, and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines, or other equipment. This is why we work so hard to keep power lines and equipment clear.
3. *Animals*—An estimated 11 percent of outages are caused by squirrels. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Turkeys and snakes can interfere with service too.
4. *Accidents*—Cars, trucks, and farm equipment that have a run-in with a utility pole can cause an outage.
5. *Public damage*—Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism, or theft can cause interruptions.
6. *Overload*—This can happen when demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.
7. *Equipment*—We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions. We strive to address any problem as soon as it happens.

Please contact us with questions about outages or to learn more about the steps we take to provide reliable service. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Ice that accumulates on lines and strong, high winds can impact distribution.

LED holiday lighting rebate:
Up to \$2 per item. Contact us for details!



We have information about scholarship opportunities for those planning to attend college or technical school next year. **Contact us soon for details and deadlines!**

How warm should I keep my home?



If you have a gas or electric furnace and/or central air, you could save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and air conditioning by turning your thermostats back by 7 to 10 degrees.

The U.S. Department of Energy says lowering the heat in the winter for eight hours a day will do the trick. The same goes for raising the temperature a few degrees for eight hours on summer days.

If you turn the heat down a bit before bedtime, for example, you could see those savings. Then, turn it up to take the chill off when you get up and then back down just as everyone leaves the house for school and work in the morning.

Or as an alternative, you can invest in a programmable thermostat, which will automatically turn the heat up and down at the times you set. Then, you won't have to worry about forgetting to change the temperature several times a day.



Left to right: Rand Fisher, president, IADG; Mike Naig, Iowa secretary of agriculture; Marie Jorissen, AVEKA Manufacturing Inc.; Shain Kroenecke, AVEKA Manufacturing Inc.; Willie Hendrickson, AVEKA Manufacturing Inc.; Rick Whalen, economic development director, Butler County REC; and Craig Codner, CEO, Butler County REC

AVEKA Manufacturing Inc. honored with Iowa Venture Award

AVEKA Manufacturing Inc., Fredericksburg, was recently honored with an Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) Iowa Venture Award. Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative nominated AVEKA for the award. AVEKA is a divestiture of the company 3M and is a full-service toll processing and research and development company that focuses on particle technology.

Celebrating their 25th anniversary, AVEKA recently became an employee-owned company, with over 300 member-owners. The AVEKA Group operates three Iowa facilities in Fredericksburg, Cresco, and Waukon. In 2019, the business underwent a \$2.6 million project in Fredericksburg that included a 50,000 sq. ft. warehouse expansion, new equipment, and facility remodeling.

IADG is the business and community development leader for Iowa's rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, and independent telecommunication companies. Since 1985, the partnerships and economic development efforts of IADG and their sponsors have assisted with more than 2,100 projects, generating over \$12 billion of capital investment and over 53,000 new or retained jobs for Iowa.

Rebate changes on the horizon

Beginning Feb. 1, 2020, Butler County REC will no longer participate in the Pull the Plug appliance recycling program.

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 and T5 fixtures. We will rebate LED bulbs and LED fixtures for retrofit only, not new homes or structures.
- **Water Heaters:** We will no longer rebate solar water heaters.

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). Take a look at our website, butlerrec.coop, for more information or give us a call at 888.267.2726.

Noelting and Retterath join cooperative

Butler County REC is pleased to announce that Joel Noelting and Tyler Retterath have joined the cooperative as apprentice linemen. Both began working with the Allison warehouse crews in November and will be on call at the Horton warehouse.

Noelting grew up in Aredale. Graduating in 2016 from the powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College (NWICC), Sheldon, he began working at Clarke Electric Cooperative Inc., Osceola.

He is married to Kayla, and they have two children, Eli and Ember. In his free time, Joel enjoys spending time with his family, riding his motorcycle, working in his garage, and occasionally hunting.

Retterath grew up west of Charles City, graduating from Rockford Senior High School, and then the powerline program at NWICC. He interned at Prairie Energy Cooperative before joining us. Tyler enjoys hunting, fishing, and restoring tractors during his free time.

Welcome to Butler County REC, Joel and Tyler!



Joel Noelting



Tyler Retterath

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