

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Photos courtesy of Butler County REC crew chief Craig Ohloff

Line crew assists in aftermath of derecho

At Butler County REC, we pride ourselves on our commitment to community—even communities outside our service territory—and on cooperation among cooperatives.

In August when the derecho hit many of our neighbors, we answered the call to send a few of our own to help with power restoration. Tyler Aukes, Clint Deutsch, Mike Hall, Joel Noelting, Craig Ohloff, Tyler Retterath, and Tanner Wangsness helped Grundy County REC and T.I.P. REC. Tyler Aukes, Lee Frerichs, Kyle Lorenz, and Paul Luecke helped Alliant Energy in central Iowa.

The hurricane on land, with wind speeds up to 140 mph, would have registered as a category 4 hurricane, which has sustained winds of 130-156 mph. The storm killed three people. More than a half million people were without power immediately following, including more than 58,000 electric cooperative homes and businesses due to extensive damage to electric transmission and distribution systems throughout several counties.

The cooperative effort for storm mutual aid is coordinated by our statewide association, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. For the derecho, almost 200 linemen with vehicles and equipment were deployed for this massive restoration effort that involved nine Iowa electric cooperatives.

With crews now working on strengthening the repairs, there will be more utility workers and trucks on the side of the road. Please remember to move over and slow down so that everyone can go home safely to their families.

Thank you from Alliant Energy

“Thank you for your assistance and please be sure to extend our appreciation to your guys for their hard work! We really appreciate their support in getting the lights turned back on for our customers.”

Thank you,
Travis Peterson, PMP
Sr. Mgr. Customer Ops/
Construction

Safety audit confirms safety priority

At Butler County REC we always say that safety is our priority. Recently we passed our Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) audit, showing that those are not just words to us.

The audit process, performed by the Safety & Loss Control department of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), included a look at leadership commitment and annual performance measures, as well as a safety health check, onsite safety and a safety improvement plan. John Endelman, operations manager, stated, “Everything went well. The IAEC auditing team was very happy with the results.”

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s RESAP program is in partnership with statewide and cooperative safety leaders, using a framework for continuous improvement of safety performance and culture.



Power On: October is National Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.”

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide safe, reliable energy to you, our members. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local communities—and this mission has never been more critical than during the pandemic.

Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and your electric cooperative has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to

ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. We limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We adjusted our in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those members needing special payment arrangements.

While we miss visiting with you

Then. Now. Always.
We're proud to power your life.
October is National Co-op Month.



#PowerOn

in person, we explain all of these efforts to show how much we care about this community—because we live here, too.

Your electric cooperative was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do—Power On.

Increasing your brain power: Fun energy facts

Although Americans account for 4.25 percent of the world’s population, we use at least 17 percent of the world’s energy. Here are some other energy facts:

- Heating and cooling accounts for about half of the average utility bill.
- Find (and fix) sources of air leaks in your home and replace inefficient windows, especially single-paned windows.
- Lighting accounts for approximately 10 percent of home utility bills. Like your parents always said, don’t light an empty room. Also, put high-efficiency (LED) light bulbs to work for you.
- The typical U.S. family spends \$2,200 or more on home utility bills each year.
- If you have an electric or gas furnace, using a smart or programmable thermostat to adjust your thermostat 10 degrees for 8 hours a day could lower your heating and cooling costs by 10 percent per year. (Don’t heat and cool an empty house.)
- Despite previously being touted as energy saving, closing vents in unused rooms can put a strain on your HVAC system, which typically uses more energy, not less.

For more information on ways to save energy in your home, contact us today.



DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



Make your decorations the only scary thing this Halloween

Halloween has become a time to light up electric-powered decorations and create a yard that is scare-worthy to any trick-or-treater that may stop by. But beware of the hidden electrical dangers that could spoil your holiday.

Follow these tips to make your Halloween safe and fun:

- Carefully check your decorations for cracking, fraying, or bare wires.
- Replace any damaged decorations.
- Make sure all electrical outdoor products are Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved and marked for outdoor use.
- Follow the care and instructions that accompany your decorations.
- Don't overload extension cords or allow them to run through water.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into outlets protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If your outlets don't have them, either contact a qualified electrician to install them or use portable GFCIs.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways to avoid tripping hazards.
- Turn off all electrical decorations and lights before leaving home or going to sleep. Consider using a timer.
- When decorating outside, always look up and check that you and any equipment, such as ladders, are at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Avoid any tricks this Halloween by safely enjoying the holiday.



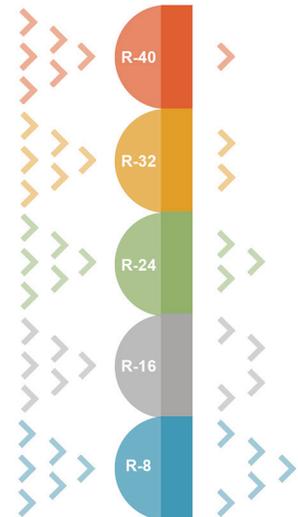
Insulation rebates available

As winter approaches, consider insulating and weatherizing your home to keep in the heat and help lower your power bills.

We have generous rebates available to add to your savings.

Call us today for information!

the higher the R-value, the more efficient the insulation



Safe Electricity.org

Helping members in need this winter

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.



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 _____



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

Return to your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Main Street Drug, Charles City, awarded USDA loan

When Kmart in Charles City closed in February, the community also lost the pharmacy housed in the building.

Cindy Uetz, who was the pharmacist in charge at the Charles City Kmart, and her husband, Shane, have filled that void by opening Main Street Drug, Inc. Cindy, a Charles City native, is a graduate of the University of Iowa School of Pharmacy.

To help purchase and renovate the building, the Uetz applied for and received a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) zero-interest loan through Butler County REC, who also provided matching funds. In addition to numerous health services, Main Street Drug also offers consignment items, including home décor.

Be sure to stop by Main Street Drug at 204 Main St., Charles City; visit their website at mainstreetdrugcc.com; and like them on Facebook.

Butler County REC is proud to be a part of this project and help entrepreneurs realize their dreams. It's our commitment to community. If you are interested in our USDA loan program, please contact us at 319-267-2726.



(L to R) Main Street Drug owners Shane and Cindy Uetz pictured with Anne Sesker, Butler County REC public relations specialist.

Butler County REC requests your help

In the coming weeks, Butler County REC will conduct a member survey that will be sent to each residential member via e-mail and/or regular mail.

As a member of Butler County REC, you have a voice in our organization. The information you provide by completing this survey will help us improve our services and member communications. The survey will also assist us and our power supplier with long-range electrical system planning.

Neither Butler County REC nor the survey vendor, Inside Information, will ask for credit card information or sell or share your private information. They will provide us with the survey results, and we will evaluate the information.

The name of each Butler County REC member who completes the survey will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$200 electric credit. Your response is an important component as we plan for the future and strive to mitigate costs.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey.



TrinityRail Maintenance Services energized

Butler County REC is pleased to announce that the Bauman Substation, serving TrinityRail Maintenance Services at the Butler Logistics Park, Shell Rock, was energized on August 24, and TrinityRail was energized on August 25. Operations were to begin in September. The facility will provide railcar maintenance and service.

Congratulations!

Lois Middlekauff-Kepple, Greene, received a \$25 bill credit from *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine when her recipe for Knobby Apple Cake was published in the September 2020 issue and featured on the magazine's website.



Visit page 9 of *Living with Energy in Iowa* for details on how to submit a recipe.

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