

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

December 2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Nominating Committee seeks board candidates

Butler County REC's board of directors have appointed the following members to serve on a nominating committee and select members to run for three director positions that will expire on March 26, 2025:

- **Donavon Kampman, Allison, 319-267-2801**
- **Timothy Dillon, Sumner, 563-380-1680**
- **Tyler Underwood, Fredericksburg, 641-228-0477**

This committee will meet at the cooperative office in Allison at **10 a.m., Jan. 8, 2025**, to nominate members for the office of director. The election will take place at the cooperative's annual meeting on Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

Your co-op's board of directors consists of nine members serving three-year terms. Every year, three of the positions come up for election. Each director must reside in the area he or she is elected to represent.

For the 2025 election, the board is seeking nominations in the following areas: Chickasaw County, the southeast quarter of Butler County, and the eastern half of Bremer County. The members listed below are currently serving as your board representatives. Their terms will expire and at this time are the only names on the ballot:

- **Gary Poppe, Nashua, Chickasaw County**
- **Allyn Harms, Clarksville, southeast quarter of Butler County**

The following director will not seek re-election:

- **Steve Boevers, Readlyn, eastern half of Bremer County**

If you are interested in running for a position or want to recommend someone residing in any of these areas, please contact a member on the nominating committee before **Jan. 8, 2025**. Please call our office if you need help to reach a member of the nominating committee.

Nomination details

The list of nominations will then be posted at the Butler County REC office in Allison. For 10 days after posting this list, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of vacancy may be made by written petition. Forms will be provided at the request of any member and must be signed by no less than 20 members of the cooperative. Any member so nominated must give prior consent to such nomination. The following excerpt from the Butler County REC articles of incorporation and bylaws further explains this process:

Not less than sixty (60) days prior to the regular annual meeting of members, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of not less than three members of the Association who are not directors of the Association. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of nominees, residing in the general area of the vacancy, with at least one member nominated for each vacancy to be filled at the next annual meeting. The written list of nominations of the Nominating Committee shall be posted at the office of the Association not less than thirty days prior to mailing the notice of the annual meeting of members. For ten days after posting of the list of nominations by the committee, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of the vacancy may be made by written petition on forms provided on request of any member, and signed by not less than 20 members of the Association. Any member nominated shall give prior consent to such nomination whether by committee or petition. The notice of the annual meeting of members shall list the names of all nominees for the office of director.

In the event any member who is nominated either by the committee or petition withdraws consent, dies, or for any other reason is unable or declines to serve as a director, prior to the annual meeting but after the deadlines set forth above for posting and mailing of notices, and as a result thereof there remains only one nominee from the general area of any vacancy, then the committee on nominations shall be vested with full authority to nominate an additional member of the Association residing in the general area of the vacancy, so that two nominees from that area exist. If sufficient time exists prior to the annual meeting, the members of the Association shall be notified by mail of the new nomination. If sufficient time does not exist, prior to the election of directors at the annual meeting, a general announcement shall be made concerning the withdrawal, death, etc. of the person originally nominated, and the person subsequently nominated by the Nominating Committee.

This holiday season, Butler County REC will be closed: Tuesday, Dec. 24 · Wednesday, Dec. 25 · Wednesday, Jan. 1

We are grateful for your membership and wish you joy, happiness, and warmth.

*Our phones are always answered:
888.267.2726.*



Holiday disconnect suspensions

Between Christmas and New Year's (Dec. 25-Jan. 1), Butler County REC will suspend nonpayment disconnections. If your bill is delinquent prior to that week, your property may be posted. Normal disconnect procedures will resume Jan. 2, if temperatures are above 20 degrees. **CURRENT BILLS ARE DUE ON DEC. 28.**

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

Revisiting rate setting essentials

manager, orders trucks four years ahead of our need, with the drawing review (truck features) completed two years before delivery.

From 2018 to 2022, pole prices increased 84 percent; wire per foot, 79 percent; and transformers, 77 percent. We cannot continue to absorb these large increases and stay healthy financially and provide our members with the service you rely on.

In 2020, the last year we had a rate adjustment, inflation averaged 1.2 percent. It jumped to 4.7 percent in 2021 and to 8.0 percent in 2022 and was 4.1 percent in 2023. Although inflation has declined, prices have not.

When setting rates, we take into consideration many influences, but the three main influences are: number of consumers per line, large commercial and industrial (C & I) accounts, and wholesale power costs.

The number of consumers per mile of line, or density, is important because the more energy consumers, the more sales and income per mile of line. Investor-owned utilities (IOUs) average 27 consumers per mile, while Butler County REC's average is 2.8 consumers per mile. This means more revenue per

mile of line for IOUs.

The large C & I loads that Butler County REC is fortunate to serve, provide additional revenue, helping to keep farm and residential rates lower. Our economic development services and partnerships translate into jobs for

We have seen exponential increases in the cost of equipment and supplies.

our members, too.

Wholesale power costs contribute to approximately 75 percent of Butler County REC's overall costs. We have a long-term contract to purchase power from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, who purchases their power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative. The costs fluctuate depending on demand—the costs are higher when demand is higher.

Although you don't see wholesale power costs reflected on your bill, we do show On-Peak kW and Max-Peak kW. On-Peak kW is your contribution to Corn Belt's peak for the month—or highest energy demand. Max-Peak kW is your personal peak for the month. Both are recorded at 15-minute intervals.

You can view the intervals through SmartHub on our website or on the app. To register, you will need an email address and your account number. You will also be able to make payments, contact us, activate features, and more through SmartHub.

A rate adjustment is never ideal, but we hope that through my columns this year, you have been able to gain a better understanding of how our rates are set.

On a different note, the board and staff of Butler County REC wish you and your family a blessed holiday season.

If you have questions, please contact us at 888.267.2726. We are here to serve you.

This year, my newsletter columns have mainly focused on cooperative costs and billing. For my final 2024 column, I want to re-visit the information I relayed regarding Butler County REC's cost increases that have led to the rate adjustment after our cost-of-service study.

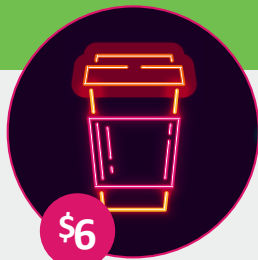
We have seen exponential increases in the cost of equipment and supplies. In recent years, the price of a large basket truck has increased 64 percent; a small basket truck, 28 percent; a pickup truck, 49 percent; and a digger derrick truck, 7 percent.

Our trucks are replaced every 12 years. John Endelman, operations

Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$8.00, or about \$240 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. That's real value.



Morning To-Go Latte



Fast-Food Combo Lunch



All-Day Power

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET

Our Touchstone Energy Values

Integrity Accountability Innovation Commitment to Community Teamwork



Touchstone Energy®

Keep your holiday tree fresh this Christmas season

You may have heard that you can extend the freshness of your Christmas tree by mixing bleach, aspirin, soda, syrup, or vinegar to the water in the tree holder. If you tried it, you mostly likely found out those remedies don't work.

Tree experts say it's an urban myth that any of those things feed the tree, kill mold that might grow around its base, help it absorb water, or make it last longer.

Adding acidity to the water with soda doesn't help the tree take in moisture. Sugar acts as a nutrient; in fact, the tree doesn't need food. It just needs water. And sugar can cause bacteria to grow in the water and make it smell bad.

Although some believe bleach may help prevent bacteria such as mold, it's more likely to kill the plant tissue with its hydrochloric acid.

The best way to keep your tree healthy and smelling good is to make a fresh cut on the tree trunk right before you dunk it into a tree stand filled with fresh water.

Check the water daily to make sure the cut is covered and never exposed to air. Once it's exposed to air, the trunk will start forming a cap that will prevent the tree from soaking up the water it needs to last all season.

Safe toys mean safe, happy kids

December isn't just the month when you buy the most toys and gifts. It's also National Safe Toys and Gifts Month.

Here is a checklist for buying safe toys:

- Check the minimum age recommendation on the package. Buy a gift that suits the child's age, ability, and interest level.
- Supervise children while they are using electronic toys. Put the toys away afterward in a dry area out of smaller kids' reach.
- Explain to the child how to use the toy. If it plugs into the wall, teach the child how to safely use electrical outlets. Demonstrate how to unplug by pulling on the plug itself, not the cord.
- Look for the letters "ASTM," which mean the toy meets the American Society for Testing and Materials' safety standards.
- Avoid buying toys from thrift shops or garage sales; second-hand toys may not adhere to newer safety standards and could be dangerous.
- Keep an eye out for toy recalls online at www.cpsc.gov.

Iowa Builders and Contractors:

**Earn CEUs / Network /
Learn New Techniques**



**February 20-21, 2025 at
Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel**

www.MomentumIsBuilding.com



Youth Tour 2025



HIGH SCHOOL
JUNIORS: Butler
County REC is
now accepting
applications for the all-expense paid
2025 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.,
June 15-21!

Your parents or guardians must
be Butler County REC members or
residents of Aplington, Fairbank,
Fredericksburg, or Readlyn.

The top three applicants will be inter-
viewed and awarded a \$500 scholar-
ship.

Contact us at 888.267.2726 or
butlerrec.coop for more information.

Application deadline is March 2, 2025.

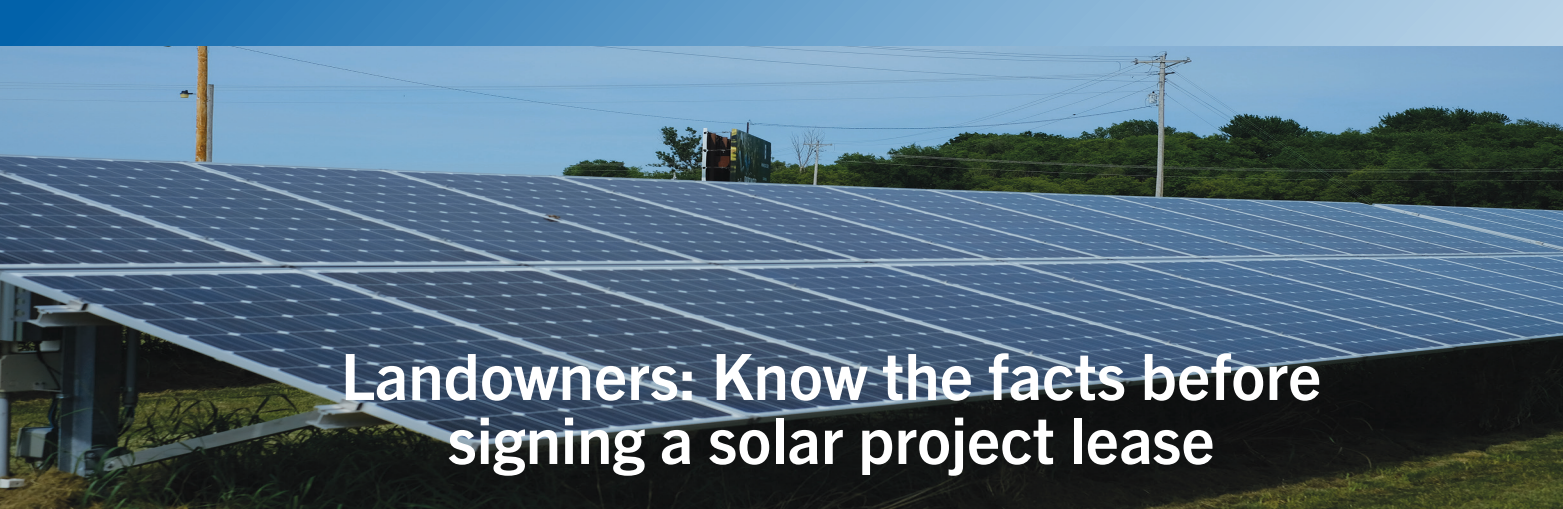
Scholarships Available!



Visit our website at butlerrec.coop
for more information on these
scholarships:

- Butler County REC Technical/
Trade Industry/Electric Line
Apprenticeship
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative/
Northwest Iowa Community
College Line Program
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative/Iowa
Lakes Community College Wind
Energy and Turbine Technology

Contact us at 888.267.2726 if you have
questions.



Landowners: Know the facts before signing a solar project lease

If you're a landowner in rural Iowa, you may have received solicitations in the mail offering land lease options for proposed solar projects. Often, these letters offer attractive per-acre rental payments for various phases of a long-term proposed project, promising steady and predictable income. However, like with all contracts, the devil is in the details. Before signing an agreement, we encourage you to do some homework and seek legal counsel to protect your rights.

Most of these letters are coming from companies outside of Iowa looking to lease land for future solar projects. We have noticed that many of these letters refer erroneously to Iowa law; referencing legislation (Senate File 2356) that did not pass last session. In fact, Iowa's electric cooperatives and other groups registered in opposition to the legislation due to its likely negative impact on electric co-ops and our members.

Some solicitations falsely claim local support for their solar initiative or that the electric output would somehow benefit your neighbors or the local electric cooperative. We have also seen letters that deceptively include endorsements attributed to the Iowa Farm Bureau. IFB's legal team is working to remove these perceived endorsements.

Please consult your legal counsel before signing any agreement or contract. Your legal counsel can help explain the benefits and disadvantages of these agreements, answer any questions you have, and help negotiate fair and equitable terms. These are long-term agreements that can give the solar company exclusive options and control of your land for decades. Spending some extra time to better understand the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement can save you significant time, money, and headaches in the future.

For more information, we encourage landowners to reach out to Matt Mahoney, energy services manager, at Butler County REC. You can contact Matt directly at 641-228-0608 or mjm@butlerrec.coop to learn more about these proposed projects.



Light up your holiday season with LED holiday lights and a rebate from Butler County REC! With our rebate, you can save up to \$2 per item (not to exceed purchase price) with no limit on the number purchased.

Visit butlerrec.coop for a rebate form!



Tips for a Safe and Efficient Holiday Season

This holiday season, keep energy savings and electrical safety in mind.

SAVE ENERGY

- Use smaller appliances like slow cookers instead of the oven.
- Lower the thermostat when hosting friends and family.
- Decorate with energy-saving LED lights.

PRIORITIZE SAFETY

- Never leave unattended candles burning.
- Ensure all smoke alarms are working.
- When decorating, inspect all light strands and cords for damage.

INtouch® is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative
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