

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

August 2025

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Katie LaBree (left), BCREC business development manager, with Jeremy Cole, Cole Excavating, Greene.

May loan closings drive local progress

Over the course of four working days in May, Katie LaBree, business development manager, closed four loans totaling \$5,065,000 for area businesses for equipment, building construction, building renovation, and a business purchase. These loans will result in a total of over \$10 million of investment, 94 retained jobs, and 41 new jobs.

Since inception almost 30 years ago, we have closed over 100 loans in our surrounding communities. Currently, there are 29 active loans. Butler County REC's economic development grant and loan programs have continually been reliable sources for business expansions and purchases, and therefore, jobs for members and for those in surrounding communities. We are proud to partner with the United States Department of Agriculture for this funding.

Visit our website, butlerrec.coop, for more information on our economic development offerings. Interested in learning more about the loan program? Contact Katie at 888.267.2726.



Our commitment to community

Nine Butler County REC employees donated their time to serve free hot dogs, chips, and water to 240 people attending Kids' Day at the Butler County Fair in Allison.

On the grill were John Groen and Mike Miller, and behind the tables were Mandy Brouwer, Bethany Carlson, John Endelman, Anne Gardiner, Sandi Miller, Lori Roose, and Alesha Wedeking.

We are proud to be a part of the Butler County Fair community. Commitment to Community is one of our core values, along with Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and Teamwork.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Deb Foster, Greene, and Pat Lynch, New Hampton! Deb and Pat submitted recipes to *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine, which were published in the June issue. They each received a \$25 bill credit.

Check out Deb's Basque Region Potatoes and Pat's Hamburger Meal in a Packet camping recipes.

Each issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine details how to submit your recipe—either by email or by mail to the magazine's headquarters. If your recipe is published, you will receive a \$25 bill credit.

The magazine's website, www.ieclmagazine.com, has several recipes at your disposal. Visit the website, click on Recipes, and then Recipe Archive.



Leichtman joins BCREC

Luke Leichtman, Fredericksburg, has joined Butler County REC as an apprentice lineman. He comes to us with six years of experience from Stanton Electric in New Hampton and is a graduate of the powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon.

We're glad you're with us in service to our members.

Welcome to BCREC, Luke!

Find us at the fair!

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are pleased to once again sponsor the 4-H Exhibits Building at the 2025 Iowa State Fair. Butler County REC is proud to be a Touchstone Energy member, which means we're part of a nationwide network of locally owned co-ops that provides resources and leverages partnerships to help member-consumers use energy wisely.

If you're planning a visit to the Iowa State Fair from August 7-17, make sure to stop by and see us in the air-conditioned 4-H Exhibits Building on the southwest corner of the fairgrounds. It's a great place to take a break from the heat or rain during your day at the fairgrounds.

Electric co-op staff from across the state will hand out plastic hard hats and suckers for the kids while supplies last. Kids can also try on lineworker safety gear and take fun photos in our co-op safety selfie station.

We look forward to connecting with our cooperative members at the Iowa State Fair this summer. Please stop by our booth and say hello!

Stop by and see us at the Iowa State Fair!

Visit our booth in the 4-H Exhibits Building. We'll hand out plastic hard hats and suckers for kids (*while supplies last*). Stop by our co-op safety selfie station!



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives of Iowa

We will be closed
LABOR DAY

SEPT. 1



Although we will be closed, our phones are
always answered at 888.267.2726.



Don't overload power strips

Overloading a power strip can cause it to overheat, leading to potential fire hazards and higher energy use. Here's how to use power strips safely.

- Don't connect multiple power strips together.
- Check the power strip's wattage and do not exceed the recommended amount.
- Unplug unused devices from the power strip.
- Look for power strips with built-in surge protection.
- Use smart power strips that automatically cut power to devices when they're not in use.
- Turn off the power strip when not in use.

Using power strips correctly not only prevents potential hazards but also saves energy, helping lower your electricity bills over time.

GRILL SMART:

Tips for a safe BBQ

Grilling outdoors saves energy and makes summer meals more fun. Grill safe with these simple tips:

LOCATION MATTERS:

- Place grills on a stable, flat surface.
- Keep away from homes, decks and branches.
- Grill outdoors only — never inside garages or enclosed spaces.
- Keep kids and pets at least 3 feet away.
- Never leave the grill unattended.

FOR GAS GRILLS:

- Check for gas leaks before each season.
- Open the lid before lighting to prevent gas buildup.
- Turn off gas if the flame goes out; wait five minutes before relighting.

FOR CHARCOAL GRILLS:

- Only use charcoal starter fluid.
- Never add lighter fluid to a lit fire.
- Let coals cool after use, then dispose in a metal container.

FOR ELECTRIC GRILLS:

- Use outdoor-rated grills when cooking outside.
- Never grill in rainy or wet areas.
- Plug into a GFCI outlet for shock protection.
- Check cords for damage before use.

CLEANING & MAINTENANCE:

- Clean grease buildup to prevent fires.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- A clean grill = fewer fires + better flavor.

 **Safe Electricity.org®**

Energy-efficient appliances: A summer investment

When it comes to cooling your home while still reducing electricity consumption, investing in energy-efficient appliances pays off in the long run. Whether it's your air conditioner, refrigerator, or washer, energy-efficient models use less electricity, leading to lower utility bills over time.

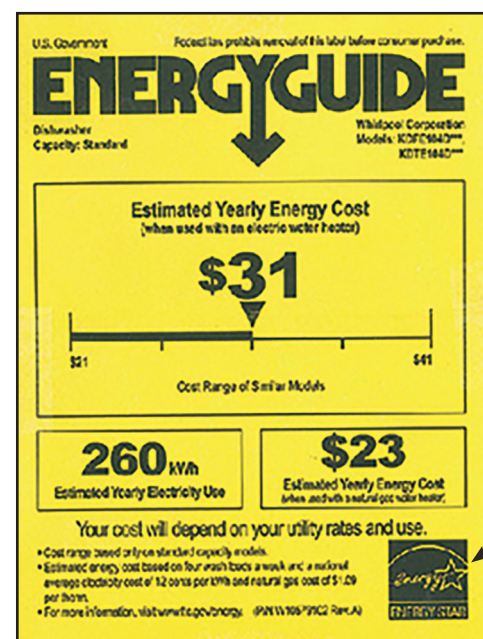
Be sure to look for Energy Star-rated products. These are rigorously tested to ensure they meet high-efficiency standards.

Here's why energy-efficient appliances are a good choice:

- If your air conditioning unit is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it with a newer, more efficient model. Newer systems can reduce energy use by up to 50 percent.
- Upgrade your refrigerator to one that uses less energy. Modern refrigerators are much more efficient than older models. Also, choosing a smaller unit can save power.
- Replace your old washer and dryer with Energy Star models. These can reduce water and electricity use, especially when you wash using cold water.

Energy-efficient appliances can cost more upfront, but you'll save enough by using them that they are a worthwhile investment.

After purchasing an Energy Star appliance, be sure to visit our website at www.butlerrec.coop for a rebate—Energy Solutions, Rebates for Energy Efficiency. Contact us with questions or more information: 888.267.2726.



Make sure your appliance's Energy Guide has the Energy Star logo on the bottom right.

School bus safety tips

School buses are among the safest vehicles on the road — but the greatest risk comes when children are getting on or off the bus. Whether you're a driver, parent, or student, knowing these safety tips will help keep everyone safe.

For drivers

- Slow down: Reduce speed in school zones and near bus stops.
- Keep your distance: Stay back at least 10 feet from a school bus station. This is the most dangerous area for children.
- Know the signals:
 - Yellow flashing lights: Bus is preparing to stop — slow down.
 - Red flashing lights + stop arm: Bus is loading/unloading — stop and wait until the bus moves again.
- Never pass a stopped bus on an undivided road — it's illegal in most states.
- Stay alert: Watch for children who may unexpectedly enter the road, especially near bus stops.
- Respect the zone: When flashers are blinking in a school zone, stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and take extra care to look for children near playgrounds, parks, and residential areas.

For parents

Teach your child to arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early, and how to play it SAFE:

- Stay at least 10 feet — five giant steps — from the curb.
- Always wait for the bus to stop and the driver to signal before boarding.
- Face forward and buckle up if seat belts are available.
- Exit carefully, look both ways, and cross in front of the bus — never behind. Make eye contact with the driver before crossing.

As students head back to school, remember: A moment of caution can prevent a lifetime of regret.

What would you do if you encountered a downed power line?

If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it? Spoiler alert: Don't do any of these things.

Any of these actions can cause serious injury or electrocution (death). Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people, and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

1. Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
2. Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines.
3. Try to remain calm.
4. Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.
5. Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time).

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes into the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.



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521 North Main • PO Box 98 • Allison, IA 50602
PHONES: 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726 • PAY-BY-PHONE: 855.918.3803 • FAX: 319.267.2566
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
WEBSITE: www.butlerrec.coop • E-MAIL: butler@butlerrec.coop
Craig Codner, CEO • EDITOR: Anne Gardiner, CCC



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