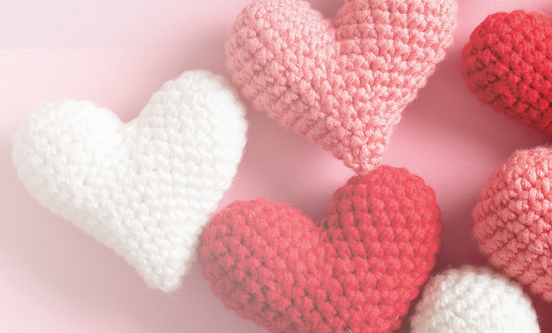


InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

February 2025

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Nominating Committee selects board candidates

The nominating committee of Butler County REC, duly appointed by the board of directors and consisting of Donavon Kampman, Timothy Dillon, and Tyler Underwood met Jan. 8, 2025. 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 business-only annual meeting on Wednesday, March 26, at the Allison Warehouse, 619 N. Railroad St., at 1:00 p.m.

To represent Chickasaw County

- Gary Poppe (incumbent), Nashua
- Tyler Underwood, Fredericksburg

To represent the southeast quarter of Butler County

- Allyn Harms (incumbent), Clarksville

To represent the eastern half of Bremer County

- Thomas Risse, Sumner

Candidate information and mail-in ballots will be mailed to members in March. In addition, candidate information will also be available online at butlerrec.coop.



Your 2025 Nominating Committee (l to r): Timothy Dillon, Donavon Kampman, and Tyler Underwood

***Mail-in ballots will be due at the cooperative office
no later than 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, 2025.***

\$1,366,689.91 in patronage to be returned to members this month



As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, Butler County REC believes in giving credit where credit is due—to the members who shape our co-op. One of the ways we do this is through patronage. Because we operate at cost, we give money (patronage) back to our members rather than to outside investors or shareholders.

Here's how patronage works: Butler County REC members use the electricity we provide and pay their monthly bills, and we track their business with the co-op over time. Butler County REC pays all operating expenses throughout the year, and if any operating revenue is leftover, we allocate it as patronage. When financial conditions permit, the co-op's board of directors

vote to pay patronage back to the members. Butler County REC then applies a credit to your energy bill. Checks are mailed to qualifying former members.

This year, your board of directors has authorized a distribution of \$1,366,689.91 in patronage to current and former members of the cooperative. This includes all of 2007; a portion of 2008; and patronage from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier.

Patronage is just one of the many benefits of co-op membership. Giving back to our local members instead of outside parties (investors) sets cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, among other aspects.

Our members guide every decision we make and are the reason our co-op exists.

Rebate changes announced

On Jan. 1, 2025, the following rebate changes went into effect:

- **Air source heat pump (including mini-split):** 15+ SEER/14.3+ SEER 2 - \$500/ton
- **Air source heat pump with added gas backup:** 15+ SEER/14.3+ SEER 2 - \$650/ton
- **Geothermal heat pump:** \$1,000/ton
- **Geo-to-geo replacement:** \$500/ton
- **Heat pump compressor replacement:** \$100/ton
- **Heat pump check-up:** \$50/unit
- **Heat pump clothes dryer:** \$100/unit
- **Heat pump water heaters (add-on or integrated standalone):** \$500/unit
- **Outdoor LED security light (40+ watt):** \$15/fixture

In addition, in 2025 we will be adding a rebate for advanced thermostats. Watch your newsletter for more information.

Butler County REC is no longer offering rebates on central air units, heat or energy recovery ventilators, or lighting other than outdoor LED security lights of 40+ watts.

View our website, butlerrec.coop, for rebate information. If you have questions, contact us at 888.267.2726.



Butler County REC is pleased to welcome Bethany Carlson to the team. Bethany, a life-long Allison resident, comes to us from a law firm in Waverly.

Bethany has assumed the role of executive assistant, which includes providing administrative services to Craig Codner, CEO; the board of directors; and management. She will prepare board packet materials and notices of board meetings, coordinate travel arrangements for conferences, serve as the recording secretary of the board, and assist with the review of policies and additional cooperative materials.

We are so happy Bethany has chosen to join us at BCREC!

BCREC raffle raises funds for Head Start organizations

Butler County REC's annual raffle, along with matching funds from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, provided almost \$1,000 for the Head Start organizations in the four counties we serve – Bremer, Butler, Chickasaw, and Floyd. The employees and directors asked that the funds be used for coats for those in need. Each year employees decide who is to receive the raffle funds.



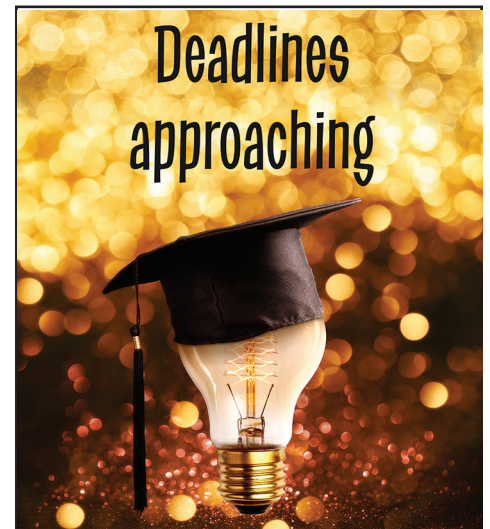
Meghan Judisch (left), early childhood director at North Iowa Community Action in Mason City, and Anne Gardiner, public relations specialist at Butler County REC.

This year we also held Warm Hands, Warm Hearts, an internal “competition” to provide hats, mittens, boots, scarves, and coats to a shelter in our service area. A total of 126 items were donated, with the Allison Warehouse providing the highest amount.

We appreciate our employees and directors showing their commitment to community and providing for those in our service territory.



Winter gear donated by BCREC employees and board.



- Butler County REC Technical/Trade Industry/Electric Line Apprenticeship: March 1
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative/Northwest Iowa Community College Line Program: March 1
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative/Iowa Lakes Community College Wind Energy and Turbine Technology: March 1
- Youth Tour Trip to Washington, D.C.: March 1

New pricing for Marathon electric water heaters

Model	Retail Cost	Member Rebate	Member Cost*
50 gallon - tall or short	\$1,470	\$795	\$675
85 gallon	\$1,990	\$1,240	\$750
105 gallon	\$2,200	\$1,250	\$950

- New homes or replacing gas water heater: 50-gal, \$275, plus tax; 85-gal, \$350, plus tax; 105-gal, \$650, plus tax.
- Rebates cannot exceed the purchase price of the unit.

*For replacing an electric water heater. Plus tax applied to the retail cost.

Contact our Energy Efficiency Department for more information



Love your electric cooperative

February is the month of love, and while that usually means candle-light and flowers, your heart might fill with appreciation and gratitude for your electric cooperative if you take some time to remember—or learn about—how it operates.

Cooperatives, including the one that keeps your lights on at home, are consumer-owned businesses, which means that every consumer of your electric cooperative, including you, is also a member and an owner.

As such, you can run for a seat on the cooperative's board of directors, which is made up entirely of consumers like you and your neighbors. If you don't want to serve, you can vote. Every household gets one vote when it comes to electing the board members.

Which other utilities or businesses do you have that kind of relationship with?



Wrapped in Savings *By Abby Berry, NRECA*

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make your home more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter months and a protective layer that reduces heat gain during summer months.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawlspaces, or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces.

The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites like The Department of Energy or Home Depot provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit energy.gov/insulation to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

It's important to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, type of heating and cooling system, and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is offered in a wide range of materials from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose materials made from recycled paper products. If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home not only enhances comfort but also reduces energy consumption. And don't forget our insulation rebates found on our website: butlerrec.coop.

Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork



MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN

Understanding factors that impact your energy bills

By Abby Berry, NRECA

February brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills.

There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly chilly day or when relatives were staying with you.

But there are also external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

Fuel prices Butler County REC purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to local homes and businesses—and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand.

Extreme weather We review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

Infrastructure and equipment To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home

or business, Butler County REC members pay a monthly facility charge. This flat fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor, and daily operations are covered for all members in our service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations, and other essential equipment.

Energy policy and regulations Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs. As energy generation shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities.

You have control While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower.

EFFECTIVE WAYS To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel and equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.



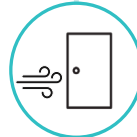
Thermostat Management

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Dept. of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.



Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours, when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.



Seal Your Home

According to ENERGY STAR®, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping. This is a simple, effective way to lower energy use and improve indoor comfort.



Maintain Equipment

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors, and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

Butler County REC is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. Visit butlerrec.coop to learn about our efficiency programs designed to help you save. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

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