

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

2025

January 2025

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Annual meeting announced

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative's annual meeting will be held **Wednesday, March 26, 2025**, at the Allison warehouse, 619 N. Railroad St., at 1:00 p.m. You are invited to attend the meeting, however, there will not be a meal, gifts, or entertainment.

Mail-in ballots will be sent to the membership prior to the meeting. All matters to be voted on by the membership will be on the ballot, including director elections. Due to the mailing of the ballots, no new actions will be acted upon at the meeting. However,

as always, if members have issues to be addressed by the board or want member action taken on a matter, the issue should be brought to the attention of the board so that it may be considered and possibly included for action at a future meeting.

To stay up to date on the latest regarding the meeting, read your *InTouch* newsletter and check our Facebook and Instagram accounts. Your ballot will arrive in March.

Again this summer, we will hold member appreciation events where we will provide food and gifts. Stay tuned for more information. We look forward to seeing you at the events!

Feldman named to Hall of Fame

Don Feldman, 36-year Butler County REC board member, was recently inducted into the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives (IIC) Hall of Fame. Don also served on the Corn Belt Power Cooperative board for 29 years and as president of the board for 21 years.

Nominated by Craig Codner, CEO of Butler County REC, for his dedication to the cooperative business model and for his loyalty, insight, and leadership skills, Don was a strong advocate of education, youth programs, and rural economic development.

In April of 2022, a switching station at Butler Logistics Park, Shell Rock, was dedicated in his name. At the dedication ceremony, Ken Kuyper, former executive vice president of Corn Belt Power, stated, "Don is just the kind of person who makes everyone around him better."

The IIC Hall of Fame, established in 1999, has 57 inductees recognized for their service to Iowa cooperatives throughout their lives.

Congratulations, Don! We are proud to have been served by you!



Deadlines approaching



- Basin Electric Power Cooperative: Feb. 1
- 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

LED holiday lights rebate available



If you purchased LED holiday lights, don't forget about the 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.

2024 Rewind

MEMBERS

- \$1,562,165.83 paid in patronage to our members
- \$2,333,702.22 in margins allocated by board
- 88th annual meeting held
- New bill print unveiled
- Almost 70 members contributed to RECare
- Over 1,300 meals served at three Member Appreciation Events
- Seven individuals nominated by BCREC members for their volunteer commitments for fourth annual Shine the Light: Stephanie Duhkopf, Vickie Miller, Caroline Mohlis, Nancy Morris, Patricia Schultz, Stacey Snyder, and Deb White
- Facebook followers: 2,146
- Instagram followers: 138
- New pay-by-phone number implemented
- 12 Days of Christmas contest held
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship Butler County REC winner: Aiden Sullivan
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship Corn Belt Power Cooperative winner: Colton Zupke
- Youth Tour attendee: Caleb Sinnwell
- Electric vehicle and solar array calculators added to website
- Cost-of-service study conducted
- Newsletter column series on how Butler County REC rates are set and on demand charges

OPERATIONS

- No lost-time accidents
- 13.74 miles of line rebuilt through construction work plan

- 4.43 miles of line rebuilt through work orders
- 2.35 miles of new underground line constructed
- 157 work orders completed
- 39 FEMA work orders completed
- Security and Response Services took 1,823 calls from members, and crews were dispatched for 116 calls
- 501 poles set
- Our two solar arrays produced enough energy to power over 45 homes

EMPLOYEES/DIRECTORS

- Honored for years of service: Duane Rieckenberg—45; Gary Poppe—40; John Endelman, Matt Rowell—25; Derek Buss, Anne Gardiner—20; Chris Wehling—15; Tyler Aukes, Steve Boevers, Allyn Harms, Mike Miller—10; Share Brandt, Troy Feldman, Lee Frerichs—5
- Duane Rieckenberg retired after 45 years on the board
- Ken Kappmeyer was elected to the board
- Abe Stirling retired after over 31 years as an employee
- Joel Noelting earned journeyman lineman status; Craig Ohloff became coordinating crew chief at the Allison warehouse; and Chris Wehling became a member service advisor
- Dawson Testroet was hired
- Six employees volunteered over 600 hours
- RUS completed successful Loan Fund and Accounting Review and found BCREC compliant with requirements

Generator safety

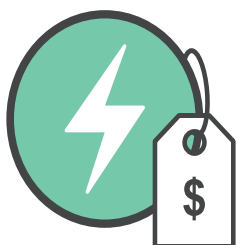
Winter is upon us, and if you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, here are 10 do's and don'ts to remember:

1. DO: Install backup CO alarms.
2. DO: Keep children and pets away.
3. DO: Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows, and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. DO: Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. DO: Use three-pronged extension cords rated to handle the load.
6. DON'T: Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. DON'T: Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. DON'T: Rely on generators as a full-time source of power.
9. DON'T: Overload generators.
10. DON'T: Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed.

If you have questions, we're here to help. Give us a call at 888.267.2726.



Factors that Impact Electricity Supply and Demand



- Demand Surges
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal and State Regulations

It's always the season to help

Your electric utility is a cooperative; it operates using a business model that makes the consumers the owners of the organization.

Cooperatives follow a set of principles that include, among other guidelines, "cooperation among cooperatives" and "concern for the community."

As a member of your consumer-owned cooperative, you can incorporate those values into your own life.

For example, you could translate "cooperation among cooperatives" into "cooperation among neighbors." Are any of the people who live near you elderly, disabled, on their own, or struggling? How about offering to shovel snow from their sidewalks, drop off a meal every now and then, offer to drive them or run their errands, or invite them over for game night?

Charity starts at home.

Cooperative members can show their own "concern for community" by volunteering with local organizations that deliver meals to senior citizens. Or you could donate food to your local food bank.

Your cooperative serves the community by following a set of people-first values. You can serve your community by taking those values to heart.



Storing holiday decorations


Where did you store your holiday decorations? The best storage places for heirloom ornaments and electric lights are dry places.

A few other storage tips:

- Inspect your decorations before packing them away. Toss any that are damaged, especially those that have electric cords.
- Store your boxes out of reach of children and pets and away from heat sources.
- Create a system for organizing your decorations so you won't have to search for them next year. For example, group fireplace decorations in one box, tree ornaments in another, and wreaths in a third.
- Store cloth decorations in sealable bags so bugs don't get to them.

If your storage space is brightly lit, protect your decorations by putting them in fabric bags. Items can lose their color if they're exposed to too much light while in storage.

Are you wasting your money on DIRT?



Dirty air filters cause a heating and cooling system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime works into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

How does a dirty air filter cost you?

- Reduces air flow in the home, leading to up to 15 percent higher operating costs
- Leads to costly duct cleaning or replacement
- Lowers system efficiency

To avoid these expenses, change filters monthly when your heating and cooling system's in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

Learn more ways to save at www.energysavers.gov.

Source: High Performance HVAC, U.S. Department of Energy

Rebate changes

Jan. 1, 2025

Visit our website!

@butlerrec.coop

New Year's resolution: Energy efficient all year

Seal in comfort and savings As energy consumers, we can all play a part in conserving resources and reducing our bills. Here are some practical tips to boost your home's energy efficiency throughout the year.

Know your energy consumption Start by reviewing your energy bills for the past 12–24 months. Go to our website and check out SmartHub to view your usage. SmartHub offers information on how much electricity you typically use during a specific period, the ability to compare bills side-by-side, past and current usage, and ways to save. View your average monthly usage to establish a baseline for measuring your energy-saving efforts.

Adopt no-cost ways to save energy Small changes can lead to significant savings:

- Turn off lights and unplug electronics such as chargers when not in use.
- Close or lower window coverings to regulate the temperature indoors.
- Change your air filters regularly as recommended.
- Use ceiling fans strategically: counterclockwise in summer and clockwise in winter to force warm air down.
- Grill outdoors in summer to keep the heat out of the kitchen.

Insulate your home Weatherproofing is key to maintaining comfort and reducing energy use:

- Check for air leaks around windows and doors using the wet finger or tissue test.
- Apply caulk or weather stripping to prevent drafts.
- Remember to keep doors closed to maintain the indoor temperature.

Get smart with your thermostat Optimize your heating and cooling by using your programmable thermostat's features, and allow it to adjust the temperature when you're asleep or away.

- Consider upgrading to a smart thermostat for automatic adjustments.
- In general, adjust the thermostat a few degrees up or down for energy savings.

Explore renewable energy Consider harnessing the power of natural energy sources. Early in the process, contact Matt, our energy services manager, at 641.228.0608. Your REC provides valuable information about:

- Grid connection requirements.
- Cost considerations.

By implementing these tips, you'll not only save on energy costs but also contribute to a more sustainable community. For more tips on building a resilient and efficient home, contact us or visit SafeElectricity.org.

INtouch® is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative
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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.


FREE & EASY ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

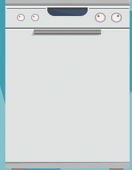
Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.




1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.



3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.



7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.
8. Unplug appliances you're not using.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council, U.S. Energy Information Administration

SafeElectricity.org®