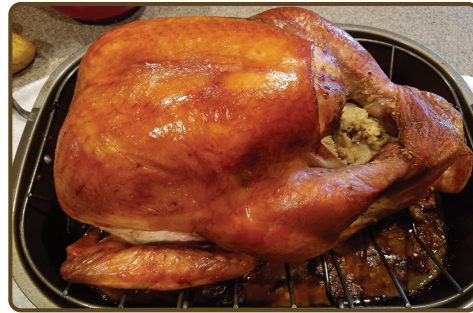


Holiday cooking: Save energy in the kitchen

During the holiday season, you may spend more time cooking, baking, and prepping for family and friends. A few small changes can help you save energy, lower utility costs, and keep your kitchen running efficiently.

Cooking and prep

- Use small appliances when possible. Choose an air fryer, microwave, slow cooker, or toaster oven for small meals or side dishes.
- Keep the stovetop clean. Clean burners and surfaces help heat transfer evenly.
- Match the pan to the burner. Using a small pan on a large burner wastes heat.
- Cover pots and pans. Lids keep heat inside, help water boil faster, and allow food to cook evenly at lower settings.
- Keep the oven door closed. Use the oven light instead of opening the door to check on food.
- Thaw frozen foods ahead of time. Move frozen foods to the refrigerator in advance to avoid microwave defrosting.
- Cook more at once. Bake multiple dishes together when possible and make larger portions to freeze for later.
- Cut food into small pieces. Small pieces of vegetables and meat cook faster and more evenly than large ones.
- Skip the self-cleaning cycle. Use it sparingly, as it requires very high heat and uses extra energy.
- Turn down the thermostat while cooking. Cooking and baking can warm your home quickly, especially when guests are gathered.



Refrigeration

- Let leftovers cool slightly. Allow hot foods to cool before refrigerating (but do not leave them out too long). This keeps your refrigerator from working harder to cool warm food.
- Check the door seal. Make sure the refrigerator door closes tightly. Test the seal by closing the door on a dollar bill. If it slides out easily, the gasket may need to be replaced.
- Prevent frost buildup. Too much frost can make the freezer work harder to maintain the right temperature.
- Keep it full but not crowded so the cold air can circulate.

Dishwashing

- Run full loads to make the most of each cycle.
- Skip heated dry. Use the air-dry or eco-mode setting to dry dishes while reducing energy use.

Small changes in how you cook, cool, and clean up can help save energy, no matter the season!

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 dos and don'ts to remember:

Do:

1. Install backup carbon monoxide alarms.
2. Keep children and pets away.
3. Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows, and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. Use three-pronged extension cords rated to handle the load.

Don't:

6. Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. Rely on generators as a full-time source of power.
9. Overload generators.
10. 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.



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INtouch

WITH MEMBERS OF
BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



November 2026

Powering growth beyond the grid

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

We are deeply committed to providing affordable and reliable electricity for our consumer-members and empowering the communities that we serve. This means being more than just an electricity provider; it means being a partner in economic development and other activities that improve the lives of our members.

But have you ever stopped to wonder what kind of an impact the nation's roughly 900 electric co-ops have across the United States?

The latest report on this topic shows that electric co-ops supported nearly 623,000 American jobs and contributed \$554 billion in U.S. gross domestic product from 2018 to 2022, or \$110 billion annually. Those are impressive numbers.

The study, "Economic Powerhouses: The Economic Impact of America's Electric Cooperatives," was conducted by Strategen for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

The report quantifies what many rural American families and businesses

know well—electric cooperatives power growth in their local communities. Affordable and reliable electricity is a key ingredient for a successful economy. Because electric co-ops were built by, belong to, and are rooted in the communities they serve, they play a vital role as economic cornerstones for millions of American families, businesses, and workers.

Access to electricity was a vital component of economic development and diversification in the mid-20th century, and that remains true today. Roughly one in eight residents nationwide are served by an electric co-op, meaning direct co-op employment and investments can ripple throughout the economy and create additional economic value for local communities, regions, and the country.

From 2018 to 2022, electric co-ops contributed \$1.1 trillion in U.S. sales output; \$257 billion in labor income; and over \$135 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

Nationally, electric co-ops spent \$409 billion on goods and services across the economy, including \$330 billion on operational expenditures, \$75 billion on capital investments, \$24 billion on maintenance, and \$7 billion on patronage paid to members under the membership structure of cooperatives.

In conducting its analysis, Strategen used data from 816 distribution cooperatives and 62 generation and transmission cooperatives as inputs into a national model to simulate the economic effects from the direct expenditures by co-ops. The model also calculates the indirect effects throughout the industrial supply chain and the induced effects from consumer spending by the employees of co-ops and their suppliers.

At Butler County REC, our economic development program includes USDA loans and grants. At present, we have 35 active loans throughout our territory covering projects that include business purchases, equipment purchases, business startups, business construction, and renovations.

The results of this study and the number of projects we have supported reveal electric cooperatives to be economic anchors across rural America. And it demonstrates on a macroeconomic scale one of our seven guiding cooperative principles: Concern for Community.



Powering Iowa communities

- \$4.7 billion* in economic development projects resulting in
- \$688 million in wages/salaries, supporting more than
- 7,300 jobs
- Almost 2,000 electric cooperative jobs
- Almost \$29 million in local and state taxes each year
- More than \$300 million in patronage paid to members

*Figures from five years ending in 2022

FREE trip to Washington, D.C. for one lucky high school junior!

The White House. The U.S. Capitol. A boat cruise on the Potomac River. Monuments and memorials.

If that sounds like a great way for a high school junior you know to spend a week next June, encourage them to apply for the Youth Tour to be held June 17-23, 2027! High school juniors whose parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn are invited to apply.

We'll select one lucky student to join approximately 40 students from Iowa and over 1,800 students from co-ops around the country to go on this all-expense paid adventure to our nation's capital.

In addition, *the top three students applying from Butler County REC will receive a \$500 college scholarship.*

Be sure to check our website, Facebook page, and future newsletters for more information on this exciting opportunity!



The cooperative difference: You own it

November is a season for reflecting on community, which makes it a great time to look at who lights your home. Because you get your power from an electric cooperative, your utility is structured differently than a traditional corporate provider.

You are not just a customer paying a monthly bill. You are a member and an owner of a local, not-for-profit business.

Unlike investor-owned utilities that answer to stockholders on Wall Street, electric cooperatives answer directly to the people they serve—like you. Any surplus funds left over at the end of the year do not go to outside investors. Instead, those funds are allocated back to you and your neighbors in the form of patronage.

You also have a direct voice in how your cooperative is run. Every member has a vote to elect the local board of directors that makes big decisions about energy rates and grid infrastructure. You might even be eligible to run for the board.

This is a democratic model built to keep power local and reliable for the neighborhood you call home.

As we reflect on our members during this Thanksgiving season, please know that we are grateful for you—your support, your loyalty, and your friendship. Our priorities are providing you with safe, reliable power and being your source for energy information. We are here to serve you.



Building your dream home? Have we got incentives for you!

If you are considering building your dream home next year, this is the time to plan.

We offer a number of rebates for new home builders, including Energy Star appliances, electric heat, heat pumps, the Touchstone Energy Home Program standards, verified Home Energy Rating System (HERS), and Marathon electric water heaters.

For additional savings, when you install electric heat (including storage heat, resistance heat, and heat pumps) that call for an electric heat meter, you will qualify for our discounted electric heat rate. Your October through April cost for heat with electric heating will be 7.0913 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) and for electric storage heat, 6.5913 cents per kWh. Your May through September cost of electric

heat and electric storage heat will be 10.5613 cents per kWh.

At Butler County REC, we have in-stock Marathon water heaters. When you install a Marathon in your new build, your cost, plus tax, for a 50-gallon is \$275, an 85-gallon is \$350, and a 105-gallon is \$650. Rebates for Marathon water heaters purchased from Butler County REC and approved contractors are applied instantly to the retail cost, so you don't have to wait to be reimbursed from us for the rebate.



There are so many decisions to be made when building a new home. Let us help you come to the right decisions for you and your family AND save energy and money. Contact Matt or Tyler at 888.267.2726 for a conversation on your dream home.

Scholarships available

Technical/Trade Industry and/or Electric Line Apprenticeship Program

WHO: High school seniors who live in the Butler County REC service territory planning to pursue a degree in the technical/trade industry (NEW THIS YEAR: HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING [HVAC] PROGRAMS!) or electric line apprenticeship program that supports the cooperative business model

SCHOLARSHIP: One of two \$500 scholarships

APPLY: butlerrec.coop, Member Perks, Students OR 888.267.2726 for an application

DEADLINE: March 1, 2027

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

WHO: Dependents of cooperative members

SCHOLARSHIP: \$2,500 for tuition at a two-year or four-year college

APPLY: butlerrec.coop, Member Perks, Students OR 888.267.2726 for an application

DEADLINE: Feb. 1, 2027

Corn Belt Power Cooperative/Iowa Lakes Community College, Estherville, Iowa

WHO: Students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology Program at Iowa Lakes Community College

SCHOLARSHIP: One \$500 scholarship

APPLY: iowalakes.edu

DEADLINE: March 1, 2027

Corn Belt Power Cooperative/Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon, Iowa

WHO: Line program students who reside in a county served by a cooperative in the Corn Belt Power system

SCHOLARSHIP: One of four \$500 scholarships

APPLY: nwicc.edu

DEADLINE: March 1, 2027

Members' recipes published in statewide magazine

Congratulations to Matt Henry, Sumner, and Andrea Youngblut, New Hampton! Matt and Andrea submitted recipes to *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine, which were published in the August issue. They both received a \$25 bill credit.

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.



Need a recipe?

Looking for a new recipe for the holidays? Visit the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* website at ieclmagazine.com

and click on Recipes at the top, Recipe Archive, and then search by main ingredient and/or category.

Have a recipe everyone loves? *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* is always looking for recipes for the magazine. If yours is chosen, you will earn a \$25 power bill credit! Take a look at Page 9 in any issue of the magazine to learn how to submit your recipe either by email or by mailing to the magazine's headquarters.



Happy
THANKSGIVING!

Butler County REC will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27

Our phones are answered 24/7:
888.267.2726



We are thankful for you!