



ECA decrease to be 2018 success

As 2017 came to a close, at Butler County REC we took a rear-view mirror glance at our successes for the year:

- No lost-time accidents, bringing our total number of hours to around 900,000—well on our way to our 1 million-hour goal.
- Almost 20 miles of line reconstructed by our crews.
- A Federal Emergency Management Agency project of over 15 miles of reconstruction started.
- Three directors earning their Director Gold Credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.
- Service awards to employees included eight with 30+ years of service, four with 20 years, two with 15 years and one with five years.
- Patronage of \$214,772.28 paid back to our members.
- Our solar project at the Horton warehouse came online.
- Pay-by-Phone our secure, 24-hour payment line became available.
- A new website.
- 695 likes on our Facebook page.
- Since program inception, approximately 200 load control receivers (LCRs) installed on Marathon water heaters.

When we count our successes for 2018, we will be able to include the decrease in the energy cost adjustment (ECA) on your electric bill beginning with your February bill for January usage and also our stable electric heat rate.

The cost of electric power from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, wholesale power supplier to Butler County REC, decreased Jan. 1. Corn Belt Power purchases all of its power supply, with the exception of its hydropower allocation, from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck, ND. The decrease we experienced from Corn Belt Power was due primarily to the decrease in wholesale power supply cost from Basin Electric.

With the decrease from Corn Belt Power and based off of our year-end financial review, we determined we would be able to lower the ECA.

To help possibly lower your bill even more, we offer many energy-efficiency programs, including rebates and LCR installations, which help reduce peak demand lowering our bill from Corn Belt Power and in turn, lowering members' bills. In addition, if you are looking at a new heating system, by installing electric heat, you will be eligible for rebates and possibly our lower electric heat rate. Give us a call or visit our website, www.butlerrec.coop, to learn more about how to start saving today.

At Butler County REC, we hope that you are able to look back at 2017 and see successes, as well. We wish you a happy and prosperous 2018. We look forward to serving you!

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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High school juniors: Youth Tour to Washington D.C.

Would your high school junior like to spend a week in Washington, D.C. this summer? For free? Encourage him or her to apply for the 2018 Iowa Youth Tour. We are sending one area junior on this fun-filled trip June 8-14, 2018. Approximately 35 students participate, chosen by their local electric cooperatives from across the state of Iowa.



The week includes touring historical sites, spending a day on Capitol Hill, meeting Iowa's members of Congress, visiting Smithsonian museums, cruising the Potomac River and so much more!

Is your high school junior planning to attend college? We offer \$500 college scholarships for the top three students who apply for the youth tour. **For more information, contact Anne at anne@butlerrec.coop or 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726, or visit our website at www.butlerrec.coop.**

When winter winds howl, power lines can gallop

While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines.



Galloping is the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines and can cause several problems, from temporary power interruptions to equipment damage, the collapse of power poles and downed lines.

Galloping lines often result from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line, causing bouncing wires, or galloping power lines.

There isn't much utility workers can do until the wind dies down. That's why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These help reduce galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you see galloping power lines:

- Keep your distance - ice can break off or power lines break loose.
- Contact your utility to make them aware of the potential damage as soon as possible.

If you see a downed line:

- Stay far away and warn others to stay away too.
- Remember, a downed line can remain energized even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- Always report the location of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. This kit should include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries and toiletries.

To learn more, visit SafeElectricity.org.






LED lighting rebate reminder

Contact us for a rebate form or visit our website if you purchased LED holiday lights.

If you purchased LED holiday lights or decorations to brighten your property served by your REC, you are eligible for a \$2 rebate for each item purchased!

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

-  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
-  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
-  Turn off lights when not in use.
-  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
-  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
-  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
-  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
-  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
-  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
-  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Scholarships available for co-op dependents



If you or a member of your family plans to attend college or technical school next year, contact your electric cooperative for scholarship opportunities.

Deadlines vary. Check with us soon.

We're Proud to Power YOU.

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity. For all the ways you live.



Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters can be a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

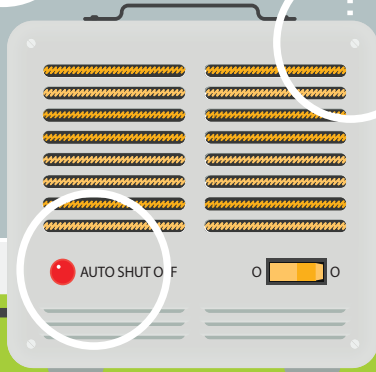
DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



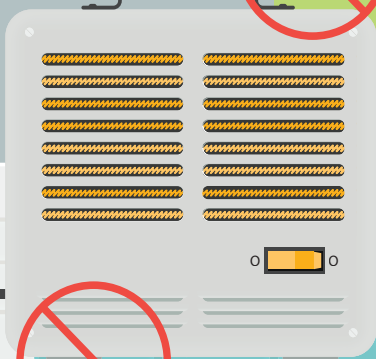
DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



On average, how much will it cost to run two 1,500-watt space heaters this winter?

Number of Space Heaters

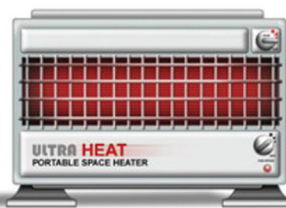


Hours per day



Cents Per kWh

\$0.110



Cost per month

\$79.20

Clean Power Plan update

In October 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to repeal the Clean Power Plan (CPP), a regulation that would have increased costs and impacted many electric cooperatives.

Your cooperative is working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national trade association, to encourage the EPA to replace the rule with a plan that focuses on individual power plants.

Electric co-ops depend on a diverse fuel mix to meet the energy needs of 42 million members, protect reliability and ensure affordability. No two electric co-ops are alike. Each makes strategic long-term investments in energy sources that make the most sense for them.

The flexibility to pursue a diverse fuel mix allows co-ops to respond to local and regional factors and member preferences. Past federal policy pushed cooperatives away from natural gas use for electricity to developing coal-based electric generation. In many cases, co-op members are still paying for those facilities—and the roughly \$12 billion in pollution control measures added to them.

Significant changes have been made in how power is generated. Co-op-owned coal-fired generation has dropped 9 percent since 2014, and co-op solar capacity has increased five times in just the past two years. Since 2005, co-ops have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 10 percent.

Regulatory certainty helps ensure a reliable supply of affordable power. A common-sense rule that adheres to the law allows co-ops to make smart, long-term investments in electric generation.

Bill payment options in 2018

Use Smart Hub to set up:

- Automatic Bill Payments. You'll need a checking or savings account and Smart Hub does the rest. Members receive their bills each month or can choose to receive e-mail notifications when bills are viewable online.
- Credit or Debit Card Payments



Pay-by-Phone

Our new Pay-by-Phone system is now available. The service is free, and payments can be made 24/7.

Instead of calling our office to make a payment, please call **1.844.749.3051**. You will need either the primary phone number listed on your Butler County REC account or you Butler County REC account number. Also, you will need the last four digits of the Social Security number listed on your Butler County REC account.

For a time, we will still offer the option of calling into the office. We will then transfer you to the secure payment line.

If you have questions or concerns, call us at 1.267.2726 or 1.888.267.2726.

In addition to Smart Hub, we offer these payment choices:

- Budget Billing. With this service you'll know exactly what your electric bill will be each month. We base your payments on the past 12 months' usage. Budget-billing accounts are reviewed in July and January. Participants are notified at those times if adjustments are needed.
- Night Depository Payments. Place payments in Butler County REC's night depository box located at the office in Allison. To avoid confusion, include the bottom portion of your bill with the payment and use the return envelope provided.
- Pay by Mail. Payments should be mailed to our payment center in Hampton. Address is Butler County REC, P.O. Box 374, Hampton, IA 50441-0374. Return the bottom portion of the bill with your payment and use the return envelope provided. Allow four to five working days for delivery.
- Pay-by-Phone. Call our new toll-free, 24-hour, secure payment line at 1.844.749.3051. See sidebar for more information.
- Pay in Person. Payments are accepted at our office located at 521 N. Main, Allison, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday.

How do you participate?

1. For Smart Hub services, sign up online at www.butlerrec.coop.
2. For Budget Billing call us at 319-267-2726 or 888-267-2726, or
3. Visit our office located at 521 N. Main, Allison, Iowa.

Cold water? Inefficient water heater?

Look no farther than your electric cooperative when you are in the market to purchase an electric water heater. Butler County REC offers members the Marathon water heater at a reduced cost when replacing an electric water heater and for the cost of tax only when replacing gas or for a new build.

When a member purchases the rebated (reduced or free) water heater, a load control receiver (LCR) will be installed on the unit. The rebated cost of the water heater is dependent on the installation. The LCR helps to save energy and money for your cooperative and you. During peak demand on our system Corn Belt Power Cooperative, our generation and transmission cooperative, can intermittently shut off the water heater to reduce demand.

Contact us today if you are interested in purchasing a Marathon water heater. After the LCR is installed, you will receive a one-time \$10 bill credit.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Joan Voy of Fairbank, who won a \$150 energy-saving gift card from *Living with Energy* in Iowa magazine! The energy-saving gift card will be used to purchase energy-efficient products from the store of her choice.

Voy was one of two randomly chosen winners in the Editor's Choice contest that celebrated the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' 75th anniversary and National Co-op Month in October.

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