

Biretz headed to Washington, D.C. to attend Youth Tour

Congratulations to Morgan Biretz, a junior at Wapsie Valley High School, representing Butler County REC at the Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 14-20.

Biretz, the daughter of Butler County REC members Edward and Denise Biretz, Fairbank, is vice president of the junior class and active in softball, archery and choir.

On the Youth Tour, Biretz will join students from more than 40 additional electric cooperatives in Iowa and over 1,800 students from across America to explore our nation's capital. The fast-paced informative week gives the students a better understanding of the role electric cooperatives play in our country.



Morgan Biretz



Zach White, apprentice lineman

White joins cooperative

Butler County REC is pleased to announce that Zach White has joined the cooperative as an apprentice lineman. He began working with the Allison warehouse crews on May 7 and will be on call at the Horton warehouse.

White grew up in Clarksville and is a graduate of Clarksville High School. He then graduated from the powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon, in May of 2017, and has been working for MidAmerican Energy out of Hampton.

He is engaged to Ashley Bangasser, and they are planning a September 2019 wedding. In his free time, White enjoys hunting and fishing.

Youth Tour scholarships awarded

Three recent high school graduates who were finalists for the 2018 Youth Tour to Washington D. C. have qualified for \$500 scholarships from Butler County REC. These students are:

- **Samara Harms**, 2019 graduate of Tripoli High School. Harms plans to attend Wartburg College, Waverly. She is the daughter of David and Linda Harms of Tripoli.
- **Caitlin Hyman**, 2019 graduate of North Butler High School. Hyman plans to attend the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. She is the daughter of Keith and Michelle Hyman of Greene.
- **Jacob Risse**, 2019 graduate of Wapsie Valley High School. Risse plans to attend Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan. He is the son of Thomas and Jodi Risse of Sumner.

Butler County REC wishes Samara, Caitlin and Jacob the best of luck as they pursue their degrees.



Samara Harms



Caitlin Hyman



Jacob Risse

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Think summer storms are harmless?

If you think you have a better chance of being hit by lightning than winning the lottery, you are right.

According to National Weather Service (NWS), there are an estimated 25 million lightning flashes in the United States each year, killing 28 people and injuring 252 annually (averages based on data from 2008-2017).

Your odds of being struck by lightning are 1 in 1,171,000 in any given year. When you consider a person's average lifespan (estimated at 80 years), the odds drop to around 1 in 14,600.

The odds of winning the Mega Millions jackpot is 1 in 302.6 million and the Powerball, 1 in 292.2 million, according to Lottery USA.

Safe Electricity offers these weather-related reminders from FEMA, the Red Cross and other safety organizations:

- Never seek shelter under an isolated tree, tower or utility pole as lightning tends to strike tall objects.
- Immediately vacate elevated areas, such as hills.
- Get away from bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences (and golf clubs!).
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Learn about your community's emergency warning for severe thunderstorms.
- Never talk on a landline telephone during a thunderstorm. Electricity will look for the quickest route to the ground via wiring. Although many homes don't have landlines anymore, many businesses still do.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning. A *severe thunderstorm watch* means that they are possible in and near the area. A *severe thunderstorm warning* means that severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. A warning is serious and means that there is imminent danger to life and property.

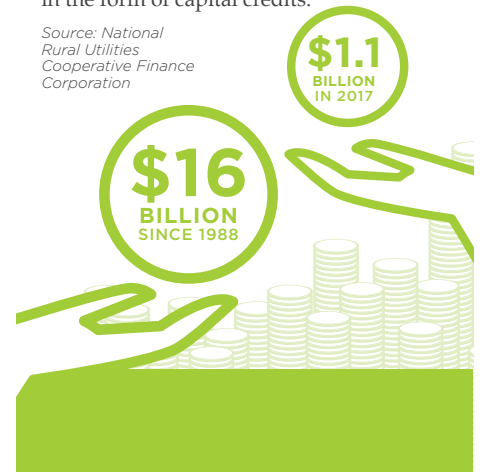
The best way to protect yourself against lightning or other storm-related injury or death is to monitor the weather. Lightning can strike from 10 miles away, so if you can hear thunder, you are at risk for being struck by lightning.

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$16 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.1 billion in 2017 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



Help keep Iowa's roads safer

We are committed to the safety of our employees and members and support Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law. In fact, we encourage motorists to move over AND slow down when approaching utility vehicles on the side of the road with activated flashing lights.

According to the Iowa law, motorists must move over or slow down when approaching any vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who don't obey the law could receive a ticket or even lose their driver's license.

Please give our employees the room they need to work safely, so they can go home at night. Their jobs are dangerous enough.



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515-532-6477 homeward@mchsi.com



Tips for maintaining an efficient HVAC system

Ah, summer. Cookouts, swimming pools, camping—it's the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors. And when it's time to come back indoors, there's nothing better than that cool blast you feel from your air conditioning unit.

Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also the most expensive equipment to repair or replace. Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to lengthen the life of your HVAC system.

Change or clean filters. Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency of your system. The Department of Energy recommends changing or cleaning filters at least every month or two during the cooling season.

Clean the HVAC unit. Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit once each season to ensure maximum airflow. (Warning: Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.)

Clear space around the HVAC unit. Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass left behind from the lawnmower can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 2 feet around the condenser to increase airflow.

3-Step HVAC Test

As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, follow the steps in the graphic shown on the left.

You should also have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit, but the Department of Energy recommends scheduling tune-ups during the spring and fall, when contractors aren't as busy.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable—especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan.



What are power surges, and what can I do about them?

A power surge is an increase of power. Minor surges may cause no apparent damage, but over time they can take their toll on devices. Major surges can damage or fry your computer or TV.

Devices that require a lot of power to switch compressors or turn motors on or off – air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters, for example – call for sudden, brief draws on power. These power demands upset the steady flow of volts in the electrical system. Power surges can also be caused by faulty wiring and overloaded outlets or circuits.

Safe Electricity suggests these

options to protect electronics and appliances:

1. **Use surge protector strips or devices.** During a severe storm, unplug your electronics.
2. **Consider investing in uninterruptible power supply devices.**
3. **Consider having a whole-house surge protector installed** by a qualified electrician.
4. **Consider updating outlets** with those that feature ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), if you haven't already



A surge protector can keep your expensive electronics safe.

done so.

People who choose whole-house surge protection can still use the individual plug-in versions for their most sensitive electronics, providing two levels of protection. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Beat the peak this summer

As temperatures begin to go up this summer, there are steps you can take that may help to bring energy bills down. Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors in your home (always a good idea regardless of the time of year), Safe Electricity suggests these steps to save money on energy bills this summer:

- Close curtains, blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day.
- Clean the air conditioner filter.
- Consider planting shade trees.
- Ventilate the attic and check insulation.
- Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician.
- Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris.
- Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day.
- Consider a professional energy audit to reveal where your home is inefficient. To schedule an energy audit, contact Mike Boomgarden at 888.267.2726.

Increased summer electric demand not only affects your monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.



Check the Peak Monitor on our website to see if we are in a high energy demand situation.



Iowa Choice Renewables is here to help you make the best decisions about your energy needs. To get started, call Butler County REC and ask for Matt Mahoney, energy services manager.

EnergyWise Renewables program supports renewable energy

Butler County REC's EnergyWise Renewables program was established in 2006 to give co-op members the opportunity to support member-owned renewable energy projects in its service territory. Initially, the program supported only wind generation. Today the program includes solar and any type of distributed generation that provides an alternative or enhancement to the traditional electric power system. All contributions go to support small-scale distributed generation in our service territory. Butler County REC does not charge for the administration of this program.

To take part in this voluntary program, complete the information below and return to Butler County REC. If you already contribute, there is nothing you need to do now. Your participation is greatly appreciated.



EnergyWise Renewables Participation Form

I wish to support (the amount you select will be automatically added to your monthly power bill):

- 100 kilowatt-hours (\$1.50 per month)
- 200 kilowatt-hours (\$3.00 per month)
- 300 kilowatt-hours (\$4.50 per month)
- 400 kilowatt-hours (\$6.00 per month)
- Other per month_____. Maximum contribution is 3,000 kilowatt-hours (\$45.00 per month)
- One-time contribution. I wish to support EnergyWise Renewables with a one-time contribution. My check for _____ is enclosed.

Name _____ Account Number _____

Signature _____ Date _____

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