

Butler County REC annual meeting to be held by mail-in ballot only

This time of year your cooperative employees are usually planning for the annual meeting. However, as with most events, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our plans. With health and safety in mind due to COVID-19, your Butler County REC board of directors made the decision to conduct the 2021 annual meeting of members by mail-in ballot only.

On Saturday, March 27, 2021, the board of directors will meet at the REC headquarters in Allison. The cooperative attorney and appointed tellers will be present to count the mail-in ballots for the director election.

One of the benefits of being a cooperative member is democratic member control. This means that by voting, you decide who governs your electric utility. Mail-in ballots with candidate information were sent out at the end of February and are due in the REC office by Friday, March 26, at 11 a.m. Please be sure to send only the ballot in the green envelope we provided.

As we look to the future, and the end of the pandemic, we look forward to our face-to-face meetings with members and the opportunity to gather. Stay well and take care of yourselves and each other. Be sure to contact us at 888-267-2726 if you have questions.



MAIL-IN BALLOTS DUE IN THE ALLISON OFFICE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 26, at 11:00 A.M.

Harms earns Gold certification

Congratulations to Director Allyn Harms for earning his Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Allyn (left), pictured with Duane Rieckenberg, board president, has been a Butler County REC director since 2013. He resides in Clarksville and represents the southeast one-quarter of Butler County.



To receive the credential, Allyn earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership Certificates from NRECA. He then completed three additional credits from the Board Leadership series. To maintain his Gold status, he must earn three more credits from the NRECA Approved List of Continuing Education programs in the two-year period from attaining his Director Gold credential.

This credential recognizes Allyn's commitment to his cooperative board education and to the members of Butler County REC. Thank you, Allyn!

ECA reduction for 2021

Your board of directors has approved a negative energy cost adjustment (ECA) factor effective on your January usage, reflected as "ENERGY COST ADJ" on the bill received in February. The decision was made after careful analysis of Butler County REC's year-end financial information.

The ECA is a pass-through from our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. In other words, Corn Belt Power reduced our ECA, so we are in turn reducing our members' ECA. The amount of the ECA will be -0.00114.

Call us at 888-267-2726 if you have questions about the ECA factor. We are here to serve you.

Handle irrigation equipment with care

Many farmers rely on irrigation systems to water crops. Just like with moving all other farm equipment, moving irrigation pipes can be extremely dangerous around power lines—especially if the pipes are made of aluminum, a great conductor of electricity.

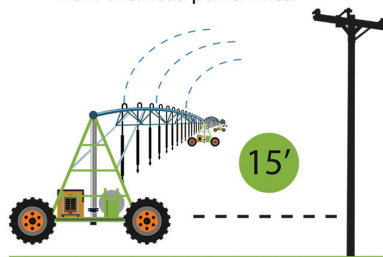
Remember these tips:

- Have a qualified electrician, who knows irrigation systems, install and maintain your irrigation's electricals, which must meet National Electrical Code.
- Inspect the pump and wiring before the start of each irrigation season and consult your electrician with any concerns.
- Shut off and lock the master control switch before servicing.
- Always consider your location and the length of the pipe you are holding. Make sure the pipe's reach will not come near or into contact with power lines.
- Do not store, handle, or assemble irrigation pipes under or near overhead power lines.
- If lightning strikes your irrigation equipment, it could mean that the system is no longer grounded.
- Talk to your family and workers about irrigation safety. Tell them to ALWAYS look up before moving any equipment and do not use an electrical system that is damaged or not properly grounded.

We care about your safety. Please contact us with any concerns about electrical issues, power lines, irrigation equipment, or any other electrical safety concerns.

Keep IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT

and water streams 15 feet away from overhead power lines.



Safe Electricity.org

research collected from National Agriculture Safety Database



Image by Rita E from Pixabay

Support local farmers

You and the farmers in your community each have something the other one needs during this pandemic. Families are cooking at home more often, so they need fresh produce and meat. And farmers—and anyone who is trying to stay in business while everyone is limiting trips to the store—need your support to keep their heads above water.

To stay safe while visiting a local farmer's market, keep a few common-sense precautions in mind:

1. Call and ask the organizers what measures they are taking to keep their customers and vendors safe. Ask about social distancing and masks.
2. Shop at an open-air market rather than at an enclosed one.
3. Avoid the rush. Schedule your visit during off-peak hours. If you arrive and find that the market is overly crowded, abandon the trip.
4. Shop alone so you don't contribute to overcrowding.
5. Don't touch anything that you don't intend to buy.
6. Do not taste any free samples.
7. Wear a mask and stay six feet away from people.
8. Look for pre-bagged items.
9. Sanitize your hands as soon as you're finished shopping.
10. Thoroughly wash your produce as soon as you get home.

What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?



Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



Refrigerator

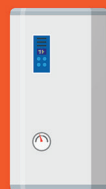
Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.

Safe Electricity.org



Hot Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.

What is beneficial electrification? By Anne Prince, NRECA

If you're like most Americans, you're interested in saving money on energy costs and in doing your part to help the environment.

Wouldn't it be great if you could do both? You can—through a concept called “beneficial electrification.” This utility industry term represents the innovations in energy technologies creating new ways to use electricity instead of on-site fossil fuels, such as propane, natural gas, and fuel oil, in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs.

Electricity is becoming cleaner

As your electric cooperative is able to tap into more renewable options in the future, your electric appliance has the potential to become greener and more energy efficient.

Large appliances have a typical lifespan of about 10 years. Therefore,

you are able to benefit from the flexibility of the grid in addition to the increased efficiency of the appliance. In other words, the high-efficiency electric oven you have today could be powered by renewable sources in the near future. This is not the case with gas appliances where you are essentially locked into the technology of that gas appliance for the 10-year lifespan.

For consumers looking for more environmentally friendly options, choosing electric appliances, tools, and cars over those powered by fossil fuels is an easy solution.

How we're doing our part

Your cooperative is striving to take advantage of the advances in technology and the opportunities of the market as they become available. This means we can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable energy selections as we continue to bring safe



and reliable power to our community.

Reach out to us, your trusted energy partner, to discuss renewable energy options and to learn about more ways to reduce your energy use. When you participate in the energy-efficiency programs and incentives we offer, you're doing your part to save energy and better our environment.

Together, our usage reductions can lead to significant savings of money and emissions. And that means a brighter future for all of us.

Are you ready for a new electric water heater?

Contact us for information on the Marathon water heater, offering durability, lightweight design and a limited lifetime tank warranty for original purchaser.

Generous rebate available!



Marathon
WATER HEATERS

Three electrifying kitchen appliances to save time and energy By Abby Berry, NRECA

In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup than your oven or stove.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying options:

1. **Air fryers** use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food—this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. They are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.
2. **Electric griddles** are convenient because you can cook everything at once—like a “one-pan” meal, and the possibilities are endless. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30.
3. **Pizza makers** are compact, countertop machines using less energy than your traditional oven. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas, and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+.



*Photo Credit:
Hamilton Beach*

To learn about additional ways to save energy at home, visit our website.

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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Periodically over the next few months, I will be writing a series of columns about usage, meters, rates, and billing. My hope is that our membership will have a better understanding of how each of these is related to the others.

Butler County REC is a distribution cooperative—we distribute electricity to our members. But that electricity has to be generated. Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Humboldt, is our generation and transmission cooperative, or G & T.

Once generated, the electricity travels over high-voltage transmission lines to substations, where the voltage is reduced to a safer level. From the

Your electricity use: Why it matters

substation, the electricity then travels over our distribution lines to our members.

Providing reliable electricity requires Butler County REC and Corn Belt Power to work together to establish how much electricity our members need. This planning determines how much power must be generated to ensure that the grid remains operational under worst-case scenarios, as well as to guarantee that the maximum possible demand on the system can be met. Consider the hottest day of the year and every air conditioner on our system is operating during the hottest hour. The electric system must be able to meet that demand.

Each member on our distribution system plays a part in determining how much generating capacity and electricity Corn Belt Power will need to meet the peak demand (kilowatt or kW) to meet the consumption on the grid (kilowatt-hour or kWh), and to maintain and operate the distribution and transmission systems.

You may have heard the terms “consumption” and “demand” in relation to electricity. This is where these

terms are relevant. Consider a swimming pool. It takes minutes to fill a large swimming pool with a fire hose, but it may take days to fill that same swimming pool using a garden hose. In both cases, the same amount of water was used (“consumption,” kWh) but how long or fast it took to fill the pool is different (“demand,” kW).

Every electrical appliance requires a certain amount of electricity to operate and the more appliances or devices that run at the same time, the higher the demand being placed on the electrical system. By spreading out the number of appliances you operate at once, you reduce the amount of demand being placed on the system during that time.

It’s not just about how much electricity the appliances are using or consuming over the entire month, it’s also about how much electricity they are using at once. If a lot of electricity is used or consumed in a short time, it creates a peak in electric demand, which incurs additional cost to the system and ultimately to our members. This is why your electricity use matters.

BCREC employees volunteer in 2020

The dedication of our employees is to be commended. Even during the pandemic, eight of our employees volunteered for 760 hours in 2020.

John Endelman, operations manager, logged the most hours with 130.50. Gary Doehrmann, accountant, volunteered 127 hours for second place. John chose Retrieving Freedom, LLC, Waverly, to receive a \$25 donation in his name, while Gary chose Essence of Life Hospice in Iowa, Amana.

Our employees volunteered on fire departments, on their school board and on school committees, as coaches, and at churches. Thank you to our Butler County REC employees for showing their commitment to community.



Image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay

Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

Integrity Accountability Innovation Commitment to Community Teamwork

INtouch is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

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