

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

December 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

Are you ready for the heating season?

With another successful harvest season behind us, we begin to look toward winter...and snow, ice, and colder temperatures. This means staying warm and keeping our homes comfortable, as the temperatures go down and our thermostats go up.

Even if we keep our thermostats at the same temperature, our furnace has to work harder when it's colder. This increases energy use and, in turn, your energy bill.

Energy-Efficient Electric Heat One way to save is our electric heat rate. Butler County REC offers an electric heat rate for those members with qualifying heat pumps, electric resistance systems, and storage (in-floor) heat. October through April, our members with electric heat pay 6.530 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) to heat their homes and buildings, while those with electric storage heat pay 6.030 cents per kWh.

With the cost of natural gas more than doubling from this time last year, and propane costs increasing since the beginning of the year, you may want to consider an electric heat system. Contact Tyler, our energy advisor, at 319-231-2980 to discuss your options and rebates associated with electric heating systems.

Supply Chain Concerns The rise in gas prices can be partly attributed to reduced production and, therefore inventories, and global demand. We are seeing supply chain issues in almost every business sector.

ASI Central, a promotional products membership organization, stated that during quarter three of this year, 40 ocean cargo ships were waiting offshore daily in California between Los Angeles and Long Beach. Compare this to the rarity of one waiting ship prior to the pandemic.

Space Heaters Many of our members turn to supplemental heating sources to stay warm, including space heaters. If you choose to use a space heater to take the chill off, please do so safely:

- Do not use an extension cord with your space heater.
- Place the heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard surface—not on carpet, furniture, or countertops.
- Keep your heater at least three feet from combustible liquids and flammables.
- Never leave your space heater unattended.

In addition to using your heater safely, keep in mind the cost. On average, two 1,500-watt space heaters used for eight hours a day, could add an additional \$100 a month to your electric bill. Space heaters are not eligible for our electric heat rate.

As we bring 2021 to a close, your friends at Butler County REC wish you the happiest of holiday seasons.



Sign up for auto pay!

Through December 31, 2021, when you sign up for automatic bill pay with us, your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 bill credit.

As a new sign-up, if you mail in a form (for checking or savings), you will receive a one-time \$5 bill credit. Forms can be found on our website at butlerrec.coop, or call the office and we will send you the form. Sign up through SmartHub on our website (for checking, savings, or credit card), and you will receive a one-time \$10 bill credit.

Give yourself the gift of auto pay!



Congratulations!

David Foelske, Tripoli, won a Keurig K-Classic coffee maker through the Editor's Choice contest in the September issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine. *Living with Energy in Iowa* is now *Iowa Electric Cooperating Living* and published monthly by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Surprise kids with electric toys under holiday tree

The “best toys” lists for the 2021 holiday season include a few items that teach about electricity or use electricity to operate. Here are some child-tested favorites:

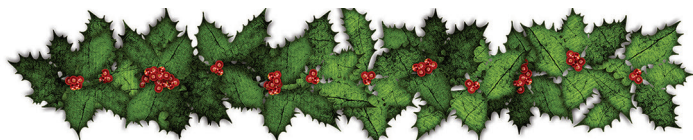
Kidzone Electric Vehicle Bumper Car. This motorized ride-on is like a mini-bumper car that kids can drive around while colliding into everything in their way. For ages 1.5 to 6 years.

Electronic Ride-On Excavator. A little “driver” can move the excavator with his or her legs and slide the levers to operate the motorized digger. The toy has sound effects to mimic a construction rig and includes a 6-volt rechargeable battery and charger. For ages 3 years and older.

Little Tikes My Real Jam Electric Guitar Music Toy. A realistically designed electric guitar, case, and strap lets your little one pretend to be a rock star. It includes four “superstar play modes” that play music while your child pretends to strum. Recommended for children 3 years and older.

Razor Miniature Dirt Rocket. This scaled-down, electric-powered dirt bike is recommended for children ages 7 and older. For outdoor, off-road adventures, the bike features rear-wheel drive for weight and balance control, which helps with safety and stability.

National Geographic kits. The Potato Battery Kit teaches kids about electricity as they build a potato clock with a voltmeter. The Coin Powered Flashlight is an experiment that shows children how to make a battery with coins. They can watch the electric circuit in action when they turn on the flashlight. Astounding Science Experiments teaches little ones about electric engineering. The series includes several other science kits, as well.



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

At your electric co-op, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.

Deck the halls safely

There's nothing like putting up lights and decorations to put you in the holiday spirit. Safe Electricity offers several tips as you deck the halls this season:

- When decorating outside, look up and around for power lines. Never toss lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Match plugs with outlets. Do not force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord.
- Outside, use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations rated for outdoor use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use them. Ensure outdoor outlets or extension cords are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- Never string more strands of lights together than recommended by the manufacturer.
- Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords. Use plastic or insulated hooks to hang lights.
- Do not attach cords to utility poles.

The outside of your home is not the only place where you need to be cautious of electrical dangers. Use care when placing and decorating trees inside your home. Place fresh-cut and artificial trees away from heat sources such as registers, fireplaces, and radiators, and water fresh-cut trees frequently. Turn lights off before you go to sleep—use a timer to help.

For more information on holiday safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

It's time to light up your home

Your local Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you decorate AND save money this holiday season with our LED holiday light rebate! Purchase any LED-lighted item and *we will rebate that item for up to \$2*, with no limit on the number of items.

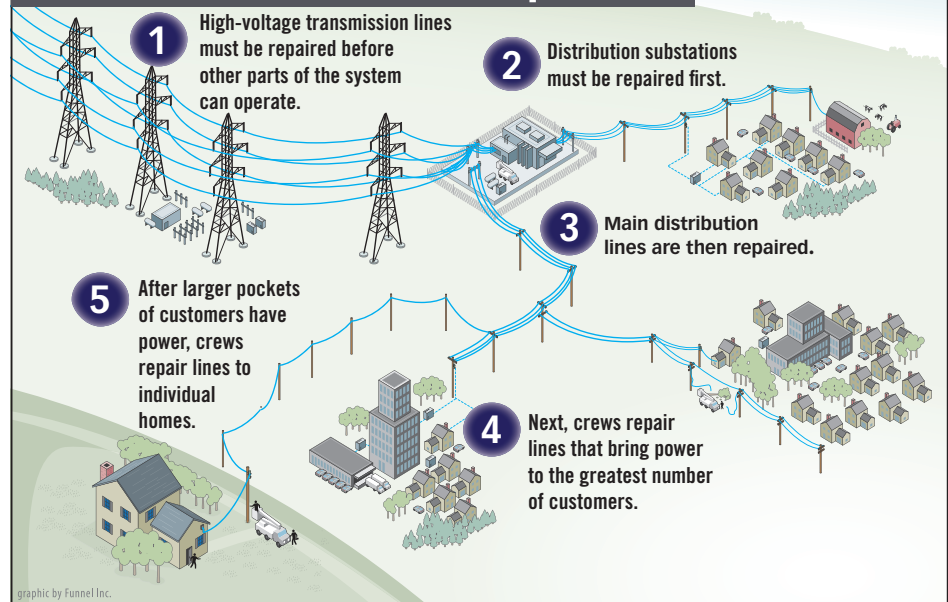
LED lights use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs, their lifespan is up to 50,000 hours outdoors and twice as long indoors, and they are safe.

[Visit our website for a lighting rebate form!](#)



- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college. Contact your electric cooperative for information.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with Northwest Iowa Community College (NWICC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships. Recipients must be students at NWICC studying Industrial and Commercial Wiring, Powerline, or Powerline Technology. Contact Sheila Van Engen, 800-352-4907 ext. 246, or svanengen@nwicc.edu. Application deadline is March 1, 2022.
- Corn Belt Power also partners with Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa, to offer one \$500 scholarship for students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. For more information, contact Institutional Advancement, 712-362-0450 ext. 0491, or institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu. Application deadline is March 1, 2022.

How line crews restore power



When a widespread outage occurs, line crews work long hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Working from substations to homes results in faster repairs for the most members.



It's the most wonderful time of the year.

And you are the most wonderful part of our business.

Thank you for making this and every time of year brighter for us.

We wish you joy, peace, and health this holiday season.

Nominating Committee seeks candidates for board of directors

Butler County REC's board of directors have appointed the following members to serve on a nominating committee and select members to run for three director positions that will expire on March 26, 2022:

- **Troy Gilbert, Ionia, 641-330-2453**
- **Dale Janssen, Clarksville, 319-885-4936**
- **Nick Tiedt, Fairbank, 319-559-0374**

This committee will meet at the cooperative office in Allison at **11 a.m., Jan. 6, 2022**, to nominate members for the office of director. The election will take place at the cooperative's annual meeting on Saturday, March 26, 2022.

Your co-op's board of directors consists of nine members serving three-year terms. Every year three of the positions come up for election. Each director must reside in the area he or she is elected to represent.

This year, the board is seeking nominations for the following areas: Chickasaw County, the southeast quarter of Butler County, and the eastern half of Bremer County.

The members listed below are currently serving as your board representatives. Their terms will expire and at this time are the only names on the ballot:

- **Gary Poppe, Ionia**
- **Allyn Harms, Clarksville**
- **Steve Boevers, Readlyn**

If you are interested in running for a position or want to recommend someone residing in any of these areas, please contact a member on the nominating committee before Jan. 6, 2022. Please call our office if you need help to reach a member of the nominating committee.

Nomination details

The list of nominations will then be posted at the Butler County REC office in Allison. For 10 days after posting this list, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of vacancy may be made by written petition. Forms will be provided at the request of any member and must be signed by no less than 20 members of the cooperative. Any member so nominated must give prior consent to such nomination. The following excerpt from the Butler County REC articles of incorporation and bylaws further explains this process:

Not less than sixty (60) days prior to the regular annual meeting of members, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of not less than three members of the Association who are not directors of the Association. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of nominees, residing in the general area of the vacancy, with at least one member nominated for each vacancy to be filled at the next annual meeting. The written list of nominations of the Nominating Committee shall be posted at the office of the Association not less than thirty days prior to mailing the notice of the annual meeting of members. For ten days after posting of the list of nominations by the committee, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of the vacancy may be made by written petition on forms provided on request of any member, and signed by not less than 20 members of the Association. Any member nominated shall give prior consent to such nomination whether by committee or petition. The notice of the annual meeting of members shall list the names of all nominees for the office of director.

In the event any member who is nominated either by the committee or petition withdraws consent, dies, or for any other reason is unable or declines to serve as a director, prior to the annual meeting but after the deadlines set forth above for posting and mailing of notices, and as a result thereof there remains only one nominee from the general area of any vacancy, then the committee on nominations shall be vested with full authority to nominate an additional member of the Association residing in the general area of the vacancy, so that two nominees from that area exist. If sufficient time exists prior to the annual meeting, the members of the Association shall be notified by mail of the new nomination. If sufficient time does not exist, prior to the election of directors at the annual meeting, a general announcement shall be made concerning the withdrawal, death, etc. of the person originally nominated, and the person subsequently nominated by the Nominating Committee.

Tree trimming underway

Across the U.S., thousands of instances occur each year when injuries result from unqualified individuals climbing or pruning trees that are too close to power lines. And, the reliability we count on can be comprised if trees come into contact with power lines during storms. In fact, fallen tree branches are one of the leading causes of outages during the storm season.

Every October our two coordinating crew chiefs, Mike Hall and Matt Rowell, patrol our entire system, noting what trees and vegetation need to be trimmed or cut down. In addition, we follow-up on member comments to determine areas in need of vegetation management in the near future. In December through March, our crews then perform maintenance on the noted areas.

Feel free to contact us at 888-267-2726 with any questions you might have on this process, or if you would like to let us know about a tree or other vegetation that you think could be too close to power lines or important electrical equipment.



*Butler County REC
Holiday Hours*

We will be closed:

Friday, Dec. 24

Monday, Dec. 27

Friday, Dec. 31

*Our phones are
always answered:*

888-267-2726

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PHONES: 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726 • FAX: 319.267.2566

OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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