

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

December 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



What is your best heating option?

If you are in the process of planning a new home or upgrading your heating system, consider electric heat.

Not only does Butler County REC offer rebates for electric heat installation, we also have an electric heat rate. Our electric heat members, who have a separate heat meter, pay less for their heating during the cooler months of October through April. Those with a heat pump also pay less during the warmer months of May through September. That makes a difference when you consider that heating your home is typically 29 percent of your utility bill, according to the Department of Energy.

In addition, the breakeven point between electric resistance heat and LP gas was \$1.60 this fall. That means you would have to purchase LP gas for \$1.60/gallon or less to heat less expensively than with electric resistance heat.

The breakeven point between a geothermal heat pump and LP gas is even more. For example, this fall you would have to purchase LP gas for .40/gallon or less to heat as efficiently as a geothermal heat pump. Between an air source heat pump and LP gas, the breakeven this fall was .63/gallon.

Additional benefits of installing or upgrading to electric heat include: improved air quality in your home, safer for



your family, and the up-front cost is less. Also consider that your electric furnace may keep you comfortable for up to 30 years but a gas furnace may only last for half of that amount of time.

When it comes to electric heat, there are many options: air source, geothermal, an electric furnace, baseboard heaters, and wall heaters. You may also consider heating the floors in your bathroom.

Possibly a hybrid system would better meet your needs. If you choose to install a gas furnace, it might be beneficial to add mini-splits to some areas of your home.

“Members can save even more on installation with our rebates for electric resistance heat and geothermal or air source heat pumps. Making an informed decision is important. The Butler County REC Energy Efficiency Department is here to help members choose a heating system that meets their family’s needs,” said Tyler Opperman, energy advisor at Butler County REC.

You can contact Tyler or Matt at 888-267-2726 to discuss your heating options and rebates.

Opportunities for students



Youth Tour 2023

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS: Butler County REC is now accepting applications for the all-expense paid 2023 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 18-23!

Your parents or guardians must be Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn.

The top three applicants will be interviewed and awarded a \$500 scholarship.

Contact us at 888-267-2726 or butlerrec.coop for more information.

Application deadline is Monday, March 6, 2023.



New Butler County REC scholarship available

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: If you live in the Butler County REC service territory and plan to pursue a degree in a technical/trade industry and/or electric line apprenticeship program that supports the cooperative business model, apply for the new scholarship we are offering.

Two finalists will each be awarded a \$500 college scholarship after graduation from high school and acceptance into an accredited program.

Contact us at 888-267-2726 or butlerrec.coop for more information.

Scholarship deadline is Monday, March 6, 2023.



This Christmas, give yourself the gift of SmartHub! Schedule payments, manage automatic bill payments, receive new bill notifications, check your usage, and so much more. Download the SmartHub app to make access even easier. Contact us if you have questions: 888-267-2726.

Stay safe during severe winter weather



When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur, and roadways can be dangerous. Now is the time to prepare for the next severe winter storm.

Prepare your home: Weatherproof your home by sealing air leaks. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

Have enough nonperishable food, water, and medical supplies/medicines for 72 hours. Also have these items ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, a phone charger, hand sanitizer, blankets, and warm clothing.

Prepare your vehicle: Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees, and keep the gas tank at least half full.

In addition, consider an emergency kit for your vehicle. According to *Consumer Reports*, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit, and a cell phone charger.

Stock your vehicle with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots, and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you become stranded.

Rest assured that Butler County REC crews restore power outages safely and efficiently. For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit SafeElectricity.org.

A Storm is Always Ready

ARE YOU?



When Mother Nature threatens a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

YOUR KIT SHOULD INCLUDE:



Bottles of water
Nonperishable food
Portable phone charger
Flashlights
Batteries
Can opener



First-aid supplies
Hand sanitizer
Prescriptions
Pain reliever
Warm clothing
Blankets



Battery-operated radio
Toys, books and games
Important documents
Money
Baby supplies
Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure batteries are fresh and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org

May your holiday season be filled with joy!

From everyone at Butler County REC,
thank you for your continued
loyalty and faith in us.

This holiday season,
Butler County REC will be closed:
Friday, Dec. 23, Monday, Dec. 26,
and Monday, Jan. 2

For emergencies and outages, our phones
are always answered: 888-267-2726.



Check out the
scholarships we
have available!
butlerrec.coop

Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

By Abby Berry, NRECA

While some people love crisp, cool weather, others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings.

There's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Butler County REC is here to help you find ways to manage your energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1. **Mind the thermostat.** We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees.
2. **Button up your home.** Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy.
3. **Use window coverings wisely.** Open window coverings during the day to allow in natural sunlight to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out.
4. **Consider your approach to appliance use.** Assess how efficiently you're using your appliances. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads.
5. **Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, add layers of clothing, wear thick socks, and bundle up under blankets. If you have hard-surface flooring, consider an area rug. If you continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call



at 888-267-2726 or take advantage of our free home energy assessments. Butler County REC's energy experts can help identify areas and factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at butlerrec.coop for additional energy-saving tips.



When running space heaters, keep in mind that on average, running two 1,500-watt space heaters for eight hours can add almost \$100 to your monthly power bill.

Safety Tip

Heating equipment accounts for 13% of home fires. Place a space heater on a hard surface and make sure clothing, papers and other combustible items are at least 3 feet away from the heater.



Safe
Electricity.org®



Photo Credit: Rare Form Properties

Insulation and weatherization can make a difference

A well-insulated home is one of the most cost-effective means of saving energy and decreasing heating and cooling bills—possibly up to 30 percent, according to Department of Energy estimations.

Did you know we have a rebate for insulation and weatherization?

Visit our website at butlerrec.coop or contact us at 888-267-2726 for details!

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 April 1, 2023:

- **Mark Wust, Rockford, 641-512-8631**
- **Matthew Miller, Bristow, 515-971-9707**
- **Tom Bjelica, Charles City, 641-330-2217**

This committee will meet at the cooperative office in Allison at **11 a.m., Jan. 5, 2023**, to nominate members for the office of director. The election will take place at the cooperative's annual meeting on Saturday, April 1, 2023.

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.

For the 2023 election, the board is seeking nominations in Floyd and Butler counties. 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:

- **Gerald Schmitt, Rockford, western one-half of Floyd County**
- **Tim Schrage, Allison, northwest one-quarter of Butler County**

The following director will not seek re-election:

- **Leland Boyd, Charles City, eastern one-half of Floyd County**

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. 5, 2023. 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.

LED holiday lighting rebate

Decking your halls with new lights this year? Remember that Butler County REC offers a rebate of up to \$2 for each LED item purchased (not to exceed purchase price).

Visit butlerrec.coop for more information!

Interested in solar? Butler County REC can help.

Iowa Choice Renewables is here to help you make the best decisions about your energy needs.



What do we offer?

- **Energy assessments.** Before you purchase a solar array, we will help you identify energy-efficiency improvements to reduce the size of the solar array needed.
- **On-site solar.** We have done the work to find high-quality, utility-grade solar arrays that will be sized to reach your energy goals. We can provide you with all the solar products and services for interconnection to the electrical grid.

Who do you contact?

Call Matt Mahoney, energy services manager, at 888-267-2726.

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

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