

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

February 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Nominating committee selects board candidates

The nominating committee of Butler County REC, duly appointed by the board of directors and consisting of Troy Gilbert, Dale Janssen, and Nick Tiedt, met Jan. 6, 2022. They nominated the cooperative members listed below for the office of director for the ensuing term of three years each. The election will take place at the annual meeting on Saturday, March 26.

To represent Chickasaw County

- Gary Poppe (incumbent), Ionia
- Mark Miller, Sumner

To represent the southeast quarter of Butler County

- Allyn Harms (incumbent), Clarksville
- Kevin St. John, Shell Rock

To represent the eastern half of Bremer County

- Steve Boevers (incumbent), Readlyn

Candidate information and mail-in ballots will be mailed to members at the end of February. In addition, candidate information will also be available online at butlerrec.coop.



The 2022 nominating committee (l to r): Nick Tiedt and Dale Janssen. Not pictured: Troy Gilbert.

Mail-in ballots will be due at the cooperative office no later than 11:00 a.m. Friday, March 25, 2022.

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

New meter update

Four months have passed since we announced that new metering equipment would be installed for our members. As we see the end of the winter tunnel in sight (I'm hopeful that is not just wishful thinking), I want to give an update.

Most of the equipment has arrived, which is great news considering the supply chain issues we have been seeing in so many instances. Work on the substations will begin in the spring, and members will not lose power during this work. Meter deployment is scheduled to begin this summer, with a completion goal of the summer of 2023.

At their December meeting, the Butler County REC board of directors made the decision to have all single-phase meters (most residential meters) installed by a contractor, Van Wert Company, Grundy Center. Due to the work load we are anticipating for our line crews next year, only three-phase meters will be installed by our employees. This decision was based on a number of factors, including our long-term, successful relationship with Van Wert Company, a faster turnaround for our members, and it is simply more cost effective. Please continue to read this newsletter and check for periodic updates on our website and Facebook to keep informed of the progress of the new equipment, and, as always, call us at 888-267-2726 with any questions or concerns.

New pricing for Marathon electric water heaters Effective March 1, 2022

Model	Retail Cost	Member Rebate	Member Cost*
50 gallon - tall or short	\$1,367.93	\$767.93	\$600
85 gallon	\$1,864.20	\$1,214.20	\$650
105 gallon	\$2,091.70	\$1,241.70	\$850

- New homes or replacing gas water heater: 50-gal, \$200, plus tax; 85-gal, \$250, plus tax; 105-gal, \$550, plus tax.
- Rebates cannot exceed the purchase price of the unit.

*For replacing an electric water heater. Plus tax applied to the retail cost.

Contact our Energy Efficiency Department for more information

Five safety tips for your home workshop

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster.

You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware, and materials, but if you don't put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of new shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen, or a trendy shiplap wall in the bedroom.











Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly:

1. **Wear safety gear, glasses, and gloves:** The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can become caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended. Safety glasses are necessary 100 percent of the time. If you wear gloves, remove them before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw to minimize the risk of them getting caught.
2. **Observe electrical safety:** Before you start a project, inspect your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires, or worn insulation. If you use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.
3. **Keep your workshop clean:** Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can become caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work.
4. **Keep tools in good condition:** Everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp, and well-lubricated tools.
5. **Know your limits:** Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

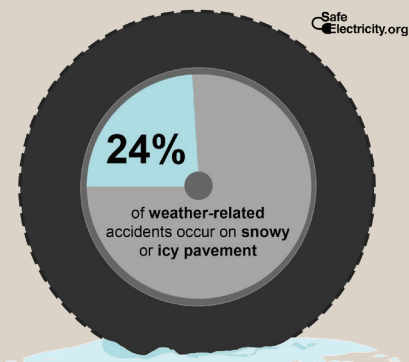
DIYers:

HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:

 <p>Inspect tools for damage before using them</p>	 <p>Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear</p>
 <p>Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)</p>	 <p>Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible</p>
 <p>Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard</p>	 <p>Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on</p>
 <p>Use the right tool for the job</p>	 <p>Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry</p>
 <p>Make sure your work area is well-lit</p>	 <p>Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords</p>

Safe Electricity.org®



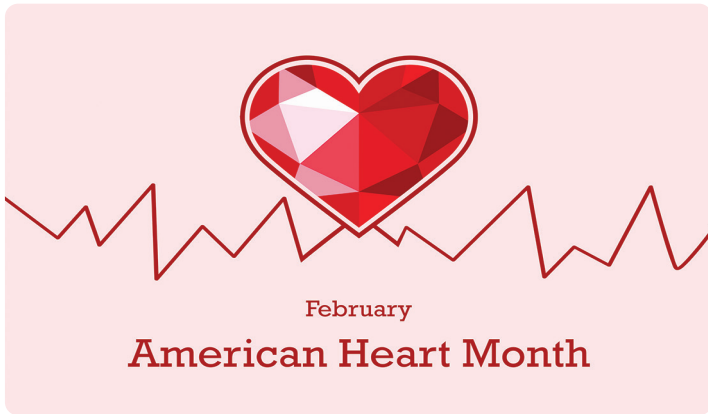
research collected from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration



MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN

Shut the Door on Energy Waste.

Did you know 25% to 40% of energy used to heat and cool your home is wasted through air leaks? Seal all exterior doors with weatherstripping to minimize energy waste.



As soon as Christmas is over, stores and businesses begin decorating with hearts in preparation for Valentine's Day.

But American Heart Month isn't just about romance. It's about keeping your heart healthy by eating nutritious food and regulating blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Even if your New Year's resolution to eat healthier and exercise regularly is already a distant memory, February is a great time to kick-start your healthy heart routine.

The electric appliances you might already have in your kitchen can help.

For example, a multicooker like the Instant Pot can steam and air-fry meat and vegetables without oil. A slow cooker can prepare chicken and beef dishes without added fats, too, if you let them simmer in broth, juice, or another liquid and let the meal stew all day.

An electric indoor grill draws the fat from meat into a drip pan below the grate instead of using it to cook the dish. And a blender with blades sharp enough to shred ice makes it simple to whip up smoothies for breakfast and snacks so you and your family get plenty fruits and veggies, even in the morning.

This February, redefine "romance" to include helping your partner get and stay healthy. Recommit to those New Year's resolutions and celebrate Heart Month by protecting yours and those of your loved ones.

Wash your washer

Staying home more often than usual means you're probably using your appliances non-stop. That also means you need to clean them more often.

Don't overlook the appliances that aren't in the kitchen.

It seems like your clothes washer would be a self-cleaning machine because it's used for cleaning. But the more you use it, the more it needs a good scrubbing to get rid of built-up detergent and ward off mold.

Here are a few pre-spring cleaning tips for the laundry room:

Top-loading washers: Built-up detergent and fabric softeners can clog the machine if you don't remove them regularly. To do that, remove the dispensers for those liquids and scrub them with soap, water, and a non-scratch sponge. Then, fill the washer

with hot water and add a cup of bleach. Let it sit for an hour before

running a full wash cycle—with an empty tub. Then, fill it again, and this time add a cup of white vinegar and run a full wash cycle again. Finally, run a wash cycle with nothing but hot water.

For your first load of laundry after you clean the tub, wash whites only in case any residual bleach is still in the washer.

Front-loading washers: Get rid of mold and grime that become trapped in the door seal. Use a toothbrush and a solution of eight or nine cups of water and one cup of bleach to scrub the seal. Then, clean the tub the same way you would sanitize a top-loading washer.



Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperatives

The power of human connections[®]

**When it comes to severe weather...
hope for the best, *but prepare for the worst.***



You can begin your preparation by assembling an emergency preparedness kit, which includes items to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a power outage. Your kit should include items such as water, non-perishable food, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit.

Safe
Electricity.org[®]

Members receive patronage of \$1,171,689.68

The Butler County REC board of directors has authorized the distribution of \$1,171,689.68 in patronage to those members purchasing electricity in 2003 and a portion of 2004 and 2020. The patronage allocated to each member is based on the amount each member paid for electricity in those years.

Current members received a credit on their power bill mailed in February 2022, and checks have been mailed to qualifying former members.

Since 1938, Butler County REC has returned \$9,283,313.83 in patronage to its membership. Patronage distribution, similar to dividends paid to shareholders of investor-owned utilities, is part of the cooperative difference—with our “margins” going to members instead of shareholders.



Duane Rieckenberg, Butler County REC; Jeff Kolb, Butler-Grundy Development Alliance; Jordan White, maintenance manager, TrinityRail (Shell Rock); Joe Zuniga, general manager, TrinityRail (Shell Rock); Kevin Poet, executive vice-president operations and support services, Trinity Industries; Katelyn Jewell, customer service manager, TrinityRail (Shell Rock); Katie LaBree, Butler County REC; Rand Fisher, president, IADG.

TrinityRail, Shell Rock, Honored as “Outstanding Business of the Year”

The Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) honored TrinityRail, Butler Logistics Park, Shell Rock, as the “Outstanding Business of the Year” at the Iowa Venture Award luncheon held in conjunction with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives’ annual meeting. Butler County REC nominated TrinityRail for the award.

Trinity Industries selected Butler Logistics Park as the location of TrinityRail, a \$60 million state-of-the-art rail maintenance facility to serve the upper Midwest. This facility is the largest and most equipped maintenance facility in the Trinity Industries network serving Class 1 railroads and shippers. Activity at the facility ranges from repairs and maintenance to coatings, cleaning, inspections, testing, and full rebuilds. TrinityRail currently employs 150 people with plans to expand to 260 employees and beyond based on demand.

According to IADG President Rand Fisher, “TrinityRail demonstrated an incredible investment in Iowa with development of a 230-acre site as the location of their state-of-the-art maintenance facility and creation of up to 260 high quality jobs for the region.”

IADG is the business and community development leader for Iowa’s rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, and independent telecommunication companies.



ACH promo winners announced

Congratulations to the following winter ACH promotion winners: October—Brittni Johnson, Clarksville; November—Dixon Marsh, Mason City; and December—Rollin Cahoy, Fredericksburg!

They each received a \$100 bill credit for the month in which they signed up for automatic payments.

Thank you to all of our members who participated!



Recipe published

Congratulations to Pat Lynch, New Hampton, who won a \$25 bill credit from Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine when her recipe for Grandma’s Christmas Rolls was published in the December 2021 issue.

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