

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

July 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Member Appreciation Events Announced

Join us from 5-7 p.m. for one of the following Wednesday evening events!

Aug. 10: Butler County, Butler County REC Warehouse—619 N. Railroad St., Allison

Aug. 17: Chickasaw County, Big 4 Fairgrounds (Show building)—499 Greenwood Ave., Nashua

Aug. 24: Bremer County, Bremer County Fairgrounds (4-H Building)—717 5th Ave. SW, Waverly

Sept. 7: Floyd County, Floyd County Fairgrounds (Swartzrock Community Building)—2516 7 Mile Rd., Charles City

Your Butler County REC employees will be grilling hamburgers and serving beans, potato chips, cookies, and water. If you don't have time to join us for a sit-down meal, stop by for a drive-thru meal and to register for prizes.

After each member appreciation event, we will hold drawings* for one 17" Blackstone tabletop grill and two \$25 bill credits. In addition, we are giving away koozies and color-changing cups to those in attendance.

PARENTS: Bring the kids to register for one of two bikes to be given away at each event (one for 4- to 7-year-olds, one for 8- to 12-year-olds). Two Butler County REC employees, including a lineman, will accompany you and your child to purchase the bike (up to \$150!) and a helmet.

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a lineman in a bucket truck? We will have the Lineman 360 virtual reality experience available for you to try out.

We are looking forward to seeing you at one of our appreciation events for a casual summer evening of grilled hamburgers and catching up with friends!

*Members only entered into drawing—must be the name on the account/bill holder's name. Members allowed to only win at one event and one item—either the grill or a bill credit.

Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork

New meter installation update

In October of 2021, we announced the board of directors' decision to move forward with a new metering system for our members, with installation this month.

Last month five of each type of meter on our system was deployed and tested. This month, barring any issues, our line crews will begin full deployment in the Neal substation (north of Parkersburg). Van Wert Company of Grundy Center will begin installing meters after Labor Day, as well, with the intent of all meters being installed by the summer of 2023.

You will receive a phone call prior to your meter replacement. In addition, we will announce substation deployments on our Facebook page. Keep in mind that you should only experience a brief outage as your meter is replaced.

We look forward to the enhancements the new system will provide for our members: faster outage response and isolation of the cause of outages, timelier member information, and meter demand information, to name a few.

Be sure to download the SmartHub app if you haven't already. The app and link on our website afford you the opportunity to view your usage, pay your bill, and contact us.

If you have questions regarding deployment or the SmartHub app, contact us at the office at 888-267-2726.





Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

In Iowa, we expect summer temperatures of 90 degrees and humidity of 90 percent—hot and sticky. Most of us cool our homes all summer and maybe even take that opportunity for granted. But how reliable is the power behind the system?

Butler County REC, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, and Corn Belt Power's primary power provider Basin Electric Power Cooperative are well-positioned to meet this summer's peak demand. And, as always, we will communicate potential issues with you as they arise.

In early May, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) released a report outlining their 2022 Summer Reliability Assessment.

In the report, NERC raised concerns regarding several regional transmission organizations (RTOs—entities coordinating, controlling, and monitoring electric grid supply and demand) and their challenges related to generation and transmission this summer.

NERC's Summer Reliability Assessment

For summer, NERC identified RTOs Southwest Power Pool (SPP), the Western Interconnection, and ERCOT (Texas) as "elevated risks." Corn Belt Power, our generation and transmission cooperative, receives power from SPP. RTO Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is in a "high-risk" category for electric generation/capacity shortfalls.

Summer power reliability outlook

NERC outlined the following factors leading to these risk levels:

- Above-average temperatures and drought contributing to high demand and lower than average output from hydro generators.
- Supply chain challenges leading to difficulty securing fuels and other key resources.
- Cybersecurity threats.
- Storm damage to a key MISO transmission line connecting the MISO northern and southern areas.
- A capacity shortfall in MISO, driven by peak demand increase and less generation capacity than last summer.

What does this mean for Butler County REC?

Butler County REC believes in and advocates for an all-of-the-above energy approach. All-of-the-above promotes the idea that the United States depends on a reliable and sustainable fuel supply that includes domestically produced renewable energy resources to supplement baseload generation such as natural gas and coal.

In May, SPP reported that they project enough generation to meet summer peak demand. However, that doesn't eliminate the risk of an isolated energy emergency alert (EEA—see Fig. 1 on next page) that could be prompted by a weather event, as we encountered in February 2021. Winter Storm Uri produced prolonged arctic cold that negatively impacted generation resources in the SPP footprint. SPP mandated our power supplier, Corn Belt Power, to curtail load in our service territory.

What is Butler County REC doing?

We continue to work with policymakers and regulators for a sensible all-of-the-above generation approach.

Electric cooperative families and businesses rightfully expect the lights to stay on at a price they can afford.

A diverse energy mix is essential to meeting those expectations day in and day out.

We know that the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. While we support and encourage the development and use of renewable energy, the intermittent nature of renewables means there may be times when there isn't enough renewable energy to keep the lights on all the time. Its place is to supplement a reliable and affordable baseload generation mix. That's why we must continue to recognize the value of and operate baseload generation plants now and into the future.

After the February 2021 event, we worked with our power provider and regional transmission organization to refine communication processes and emergency operations procedures. We are better equipped to respond to and communicate potential EEA events impacting our service area.

We will continue to advocate on your behalf and do everything we can to continue to live up to that mission.

What is NERC?

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) is a not-for-profit international regulatory authority whose mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.

What is an RTO?

Regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs), are also referred to as power pools. RTOs work as "air-traffic controllers" of the grid (see Fig. 2 on next page) to ensure reliable supplies of power, adequate transmission infrastructure, and competitive wholesale electricity prices on behalf of their members.

Energy Emergency Alert Grid Condition Levels



Energy Emergency Alerts indicate all available generation has been committed to meet region-wide demand. As conditions worsen, voluntary conservation or service interruptions may be necessary to prevent uncontrolled outages.

Fig. 1

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL: AN ANALOGY


Air Traffic Control		Southwest Power Pool
Does not own airplanes, airlines or airports		Does not own utilities, power generators or transmission lines
Does not own the airspace it monitors		Does not own the land electricity flows across
Directs air routes to ensure airplanes and passengers are safely transported		Monitors and directs regional bulk power grid to ensure electricity gets from where it's made to where it's needed

Fig. 2

Operate your generator safely

When the electricity goes out, generators can help you get through until power is restored. However, before starting your generator, it is vital to educate yourself on how to use one safely.

There are two types of generators for homeowners: Standby generators are installed directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out. Portable generators are usually gas powered. Your generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics you will plug into it.

When you refuel a generator, the engine needs to be cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow. Also, be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.

Carbon monoxide fumes emitted by the generator's gasoline engine can be deadly. Always operate your portable generator outdoors at least 10 feet from your home.

Standby generators should have a transfer safety switch, installed by a professional, to prevent back feed. If you are not careful with the installation of your generator, you can put the lives of others in danger away from your home because of back feed—feeding electricity back through your electrical system and meter into the power lines. For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Keep it *cool*

Nothing brings us together better in the summer than a cookout. But on the hottest days, it's tempting to move the party indoors. Instead, consider cooling your patio:

Add a roof. Or a retractable awning or a pergola.

Install fans. If your patio is covered, a ceiling fan can create a soft breeze, cooling those sitting or standing nearby.

Try a mister. This cooling system sprays a fine mist that evaporates in the air without hitting the ground or getting the patio—or the people using it—wet. A tip: Get a good system, as the ones you connect to your garden hose could leave the party all wet.

Paint the floor. Painting the floor a light color will keep it from absorbing so much heat. Or, throw a sturdy outdoor rug on the floor.

Find Your Fun at the Iowa State Fair!

Join us Aug. 11-21, at the Iowa State Fair!

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are once again sponsoring the Rastetter 4-H Building on the south side of the fairgrounds.



Be sure to read your August newsletter and check Facebook for more information on what you can expect when you visit us at our booth.

See you at the fair!

Wedeking joins BCREC family



Butler County REC is pleased to announce that Alesha Wedeking (pictured) has joined the cooperative as our billing clerk. She began May 16 at the headquarters in Allison.

Alesha, a Clarksville High School graduate, holds an administrative assistant associate degree and a bachelor's degree in business administration, both from Hamilton College. She comes to us from the Rehabilitation Center of Allison where she was the human resources coordinator.

She and her husband, Lucas, are members of Butler County REC, residing in Clarksville. They are the parents of three children.

About her new position, Alesha commented, "I am excited to learn everything about the billing process. I have been surprised by all of the 'behind-the-scenes' work that takes place that I never considered as a member of Butler County REC."

Welcome to Butler County REC, Alesha!

Board allocates \$1,692,154.42 in margins

Unlike other electric utilities, Butler County REC exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. As a member-owner, you share in the excess margins in the form of patronage dividends.

After reviewing the operating revenues for 2021, the board of directors at Butler County REC approved to set aside \$1,692,154.42 in excess margins. These margins – retained as patronage capital – will be used to help keep your electric cooperative financially sound and the quality of service as high as possible.

Allocations on June bills

Your share of the 2021 margin – your patronage allocation – was listed in the box directly below your name on the June 2022 electric bill for May's usage. For your information, the total unretired patronage for all your accounts was included.

The amount you earn in a given year is based upon the amount of electricity you use. The sum of your bills for the year is multiplied by a percentage to determine your allocation.

Patronage return

The latest payback of patronage was in February 2022, when \$1,171,689.68 was returned for 2003 and a portion of 2004 and 2020.

Keep your address with us current

If you move out of our service territory and will no longer receive electrical service from Butler County REC, it is important to keep your address current with us. We rely on former co-op members to send us their new addresses for patronage disbursement mailings.

Thank you for your membership!

Your energy-efficient summer

When the heat soars this summer, so can your cooling costs. Being more energy efficient can help you cut back on those energy expenses.

The Energy Education Council provides tips on efficient ways to keep cool in hot weather:

- Trim back foliage at least two feet around the air conditioner, and remove debris to ensure that airflow to the unit is not blocked.
- While your air conditioner is in use, replace your filter each month.
- While the air conditioner is running, always close windows and doors to increase efficiency.



- Use ceiling fans to make use of the wind chill effect while you are home. Set them to spin counterclockwise during warmer months so that they push air down and

make you feel cooler.

- Use the outside air to your advantage. Open your windows at night to let cooler air in. Avoid unnecessary trips outside that would let in midday heat.
- Close curtains and blinds to keep sunlight out on hot days.
- Dress in loose, lightweight clothing.
- Check for cracks and gaps around windows and doors and seal them with caulk and weather stripping.

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