

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

October 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Thank you for attending Member Appreciation Events

In February when we began planning our first-ever member appreciation events, we were unsure. About everything. Where should the events be held? How much food should we order? What should we give away? Most importantly, “Will our members attend?” And you did!

We were happy to see so many of you at the events—both eating a sit-down meal and driving through to pick up food. Over 1,000 meals were served among the four events, and we consider that a great success.

### Drawing winners

- *Grill:* Trista Calonder, Bremer; James Leerhoff, Butler; Jerry Schudlach, Chickasaw; David Keith, Floyd
- *\$25 Bill Credits:* Jason Gilmour and Kathleen Osborn, Bremer; Larry Gutknecht and Randy Neal, Butler; Ben Goddard and Roger Vohsman, Chickasaw; Kevin Deetz and Lisa Koehler, Floyd
- *Bike, 4- to 7-years-old:* Whitney Drewelow, Bremer; Hadley Landers, Butler; Sawyer Steere, Chickasaw; Briggs Bochmann and Asher Milius, Floyd
- *Bike, 8- to 12-years-old:* Mallory Kutzner, Bremer; Silas Stauffer, Butler; Josh Hobert, Chickasaw

**We appreciate your business and your support!**



# What makes your electric utility special

Your electricity comes from a utility that follows a “cooperative” business model. Like a food co-op or a housing cooperative, your electric cooperative is guided by seven principles that non-cooperative utilities don’t follow.

The three with the most impact on consumers are:

1. Electric cooperatives consider their consumers to be “members.” The principle of “open and voluntary membership” means you are a member, not just a customer.
2. All of the people on your electric cooperative’s board of directors are consumer-members like you. The principle of “democratic member control” means that you may run for a seat on the board; you may vote for which board candidates may be on the board; and you may be asked to vote on other important utility matters. Every household/business gets a vote.
3. By paying your electric bill every month, you contribute to the financial success of the cooperative. Under the principle of “members’ economic participation,” if the cooperative collects more revenue than it needs to operate and serve its members, you may get a sort of refund—called a capital credit, a dividend, or patronage.

The remaining four principles are “autonomy and independence,” which makes sure the utility is democratically controlled; “education, training, and information” means your utility helps everyone understand the benefits of a cooperative; “cooperation among cooperatives” encourages your utility to help nearby electric cooperatives during storms and other emergencies; and “concern with community” is a principle that involves your utility in economic development and volunteerism that help members and their communities.



**Focused on YOU.**

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we’re a co-op, we’re able to adapt to our community’s unique needs. That’s the power of co-op membership.

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**



## Remodeling isn’t just about looking good

If you’re planning to do some home remodeling, it’s a good idea to think beyond new kitchen countertops and bathroom tile. Consider:

- Replacing an older refrigerator, dishwasher, washer/dryer, or other major appliance with a model that is more energy efficient. Energy Star appliances use between 10 and 50 percent less energy than other models.
- Swapping out older, single-pane windows for double-pane windows with low-E, argon-filled glass will keep heat out of your home during the summer and keep it in during the winter. Some windows also have Energy Star approval.
- If your furnace is on its last legs, consult with an expert before replacing it with something similar. One of the most important features for energy efficiency in a furnace is its size.
- When you replace light fixtures, choose LED lighting. Over the years, lighting manufacturers have added different styles. They’re long-lasting, energy efficient, hard to break, and cool to the touch.

**REMEMBER:** Your cooperative has rebates for many qualifying, efficient updates to your home. Be sure to contact us or visit our website for more information!

### Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

**Integrity | Accountability | Innovation |  
Commitment to Community | Teamwork**

# It's only October: Should you turn on the heat?

It's tempting to declare the first downright chilly evening of the autumn the official first day of heating season. Before you turn the heat on at home, however, consider:

- **Bundling up in layers** of clothing, a sweater, or a cozy throw while you're watching TV in the evenings.
- **Throwing a couple of extra blankets on each bed** to keep everyone toasty warm overnight.
- **Running ceiling fans** in the bedrooms. If you reverse the spin of the blades to clockwise, they will push warm air—which rises—back down into your room.
- **Opening window coverings** on sunny days to let the sun's warmth into your rooms. The

fabric on furniture and carpets will absorb and retain some of the heat into the evenings. Close the window coverings once the sun goes down, though, so cool air can't get into the house.

- **Gathering everyone into a single room** for some family fun and running a space heater in that room only.
- **Wearing socks or shoes** indoors. Keeping your feet warm will help your whole body feel warmer.
- **Doing household chores after dark.** The movement involved with the work will keep you warm. And running your dishwasher, washing machine, and



clothes dryer after dark will add a bit of heat to the air.

- **Resisting the temptation to warm up your home by lighting a fire** in your wood-burning fireplace. Most of the heat it produces goes up the chimney, along with any warm air that's already in the house. Don't turn on your heater until you really need it this fall. Instead, conserve some energy by keeping your family warm in other ways.



## HALLOWEEN COSTUME SAFETY

- Wear flame-resistant costumes.
- Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape.
- Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional for a proper fitting and instructions.
- Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

## RECare MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Your rural electric cooperative continues to extend a helping hand to members in need. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of members helping members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

You may make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your electric bill. Even a dollar a month pledge will help others. **You have the power to make a difference.**

### RECare CONSUMER AUTHORIZATION FORM

- I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will make a one-time contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to RECare. My check is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_



Return to your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Local volunteers nominated

This year Butler County REC had three nominees for the statewide cooperative Shine the Light contest. Although the three winners were from other Iowa cooperatives, we felt it was important to showcase these individuals.

**Tom and Julie Hoodjer, Clarksville** Tom and Julie are active in their local scouting program, serving as scout leaders and helping several boys become Eagle Scouts. In addition, they are active in their church and community, helping whenever additional hands are needed. The Hoodjers have also spent a number of hours coaching city recreation sports such as softball, baseball, and basketball. Tom and Julie were nominated by Patrick Norton of Clarksville.

**Janet Judisch, Sumner** Janet volunteers at her church for a number of tasks, including sorting clothes for their Helping Hands Closet, a service for low-income families. She also volunteers at Hillcrest Living in Sumner where she helps with church services and music. In addition, she is always sharing the strawberries and raspberries from her large garden. Janet was nominated by Nancy Jaschen of Tripoli.

**Linda Pruin, Clarksville** Linda has volunteered for 15 years as a Senior Health Insurance Information Program and Senior Medicare Patrol counselor with the Waverly Health Center, Waverly. She works one-on-one with people turning 65 to help them understand the Medicare program. Not only did Linda attend training sessions to become a counselor, she is required to participate in annual continuing education. She meets with people when they enroll in Medicare and then helps them to navigate the open enrollment period. Linda has worked with an average of over 100 individuals per year since she became a volunteer. Linda was nominated by her husband, Harlan Pruin.

An advertisement for safety during hunting. The background is a photograph of a hunter in a yellow safety vest and orange hat, holding a rifle, standing in a field. In the foreground, a brown and white speckled dog is sitting in tall grass. The text 'BE SAFE ON THE HUNT' is written in large, bold, orange and black letters. Below the text is a list of safety tips and the Safe Electricity.org logo.

**BE SAFE  
ON THE HUNT**

- Always implement firearm safety techniques.
- Do not lean a tree stand against a utility pole.
- Never fire toward power lines or equipment.

**Safe  
Electricity.org®**



### Cozy up your home with insulation

If you are considering insulation, remember that Butler County REC has rebates available to help with the cost of the materials for ceiling, foundation, wall, and duct insulation. We also have a rebate for weatherization items.

**Contact us to learn more about our rebates.**

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