

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



HS students: Interested in public service and leadership?

High schoolers who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Butler County REC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area and they are invited to **register at www.IowaYouthTour.com by Oct. 1.**

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership, or government," remarked Craig Codner, CEO of Butler County REC. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about cooperative career paths in smaller communities."

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Thursday, Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 27, 7:00 p.m. – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to **win a pair of Apple AirPods**. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for **two \$1,000 college scholarships**. All students who register online by Oct. 1 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear from former Iowa Youth Tour students who pursued their passion for government service and leadership after attending the weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The 2023 Youth Tour is slated for June 17-23.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact Anne at anne@butlerrec.coop or 888-267-2726, ext. 111.



**WANTED:
Rural Iowa
high school
students
who have a
passion for
leadership**

Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com



Meter deployment update

Butler County REC is happy to report that meter deployment is underway. New meters have been installed in substations in our service territory between Hwy. 3 and Parkersburg. At the end of August, four substations were complete.

We are calling members prior to their meter being replaced and also announcing the substations and areas on our Facebook page, facebook.com/bcrec. In addition, when the meter installer arrives at your property, they will knock on your door to let you know your meter is going to be replaced. You should only experience a brief outage during replacement.

Don't forget to download the SmartHub app to view your usage, pay your bill, and contact us.

Please call us at 888-267-2726 if you have questions.



Follow us on Instagram at
[instagram.com/
butlercountynec](https://instagram.com/butlercountynec)

Prepare for fall energy surge

Even if the days of remote school are behind you and the kids are leaving the house every morning, your energy bills could still surge.

If your family wakes up earlier than the sun comes up, the lights go on. Students are using the computer and printer more for homework assignments. Shorter days mean the lights go on earlier in the evening.

Plan for what could be a bump in energy use by teaching your children how to conserve electricity and to create less waste overall. A few tips:

- Teach your children how to put the computer into sleep mode when they are finished using it, even if they plan on returning later. Electronics in sleep mode use about 80 percent less electricity than when operating at full power.
- Buying new computer equipment this year? Computers with an EnergyStar rating use 70 percent less electricity overall, while EnergyStar monitors draw 90 percent less.
- Desk lamps and other concentrated lighting create a productive work environment without wasting excess light. Replace halogen or incandescent bulbs desk lamps with LED bulbs.
- Unplug electronics when not in use or they have finished charging.
- Turn off the lights when no one is in the room.
- Consider a programmable thermostat that will adjust to your lifestyle.
- Use your crockpot, air fryer, or Instant Pot for meals.
- If possible, program your dishwasher to run overnight rather than after supper when energy use is generally higher.

Considering insulating your home?

Making sure your home is properly insulated can go a long way toward making your home more energy efficient and comfortable.

Before you attempt to replace insulation, however, there are some tasks of the job to consider, including location and your comfort level with starting and completing the job correctly. If you will be installing batt insulation, check to see if it is labeled with an R-value or find an online value chart by zone.

Consider the following before purchasing insulation.

Should I do the job myself?

Whether you take it on depends on several factors, according to the Insulation Institute, including:

- If the space you want to insulate is open and accessible, such as an attic or basement.
- The type of material you want to use. Batts or rolls are often installed by homeowners.
- Your skills and comfort level.
- Any safety issues that might make the job more suitable for a professional.
- How much time will be needed to address air leaks.

Can I complete it safely?

A professional should be called in to correct problems and complete the job if you find these conditions or issues, according to the institute:

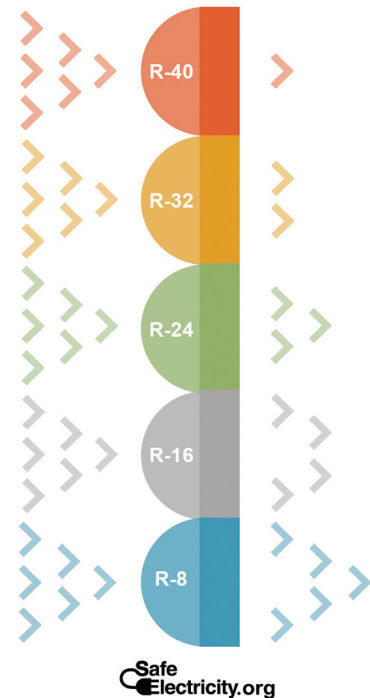
- Wet or damp insulation.
- Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists.
- Vents that exhaust moist air directly in the attic space instead of outdoors.
- A history of ice dams in the winter.
- Little or no attic ventilation.
- Knob-and-tube wiring (homes pre-1930).
- Unsealed and uninsulated recessed (“can”) lights (special care must be taken when insulating around these).
- Possible presence of asbestos (see next tip).

What is the age of my home?

If your home was built around 1975 or earlier, the insulation may be vermiculite, which can contain asbestos. It is a lightweight, pea-sized, flaky gray material, according to the institute. If you suspect you have this type of insulation, do not disturb it and hire a professional to test it. Your local health department might be able to help locate a reputable testing company. If asbestos is found, the insulation will need to be removed by a professional.

For more tips on efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

the higher the R-value, the more efficient the insulation



Keep food safe when the power goes out By Abby Berry

We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked.

Here are a few food safety tips for before, during and after a power outage.

Before an outage

Keep an emergency supply kit on hand, and be sure to include nonperishable food items. If you have advance warning that a long outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice for your refrigerated items.

During an outage

Do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items—also if foods have an unusual color, odor, or texture.

There are a few items that are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

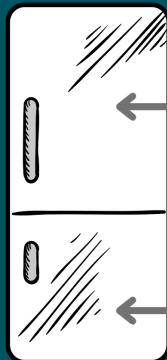
- hard cheeses that are properly wrapped
- butter or margarine that is properly wrapped
- taco, barbecue, and soy sauces
- peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup, and relish

After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit www.ready.gov/food.

Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



Remember to **LOOK UP**
if you operate one of these

Is it OK to switch between a/c, heat during the fall?

Warm late summer and early fall days can turn chilly once the sun goes down.

If it's hot enough during the day for the air conditioner and cool enough at night for the heat, here are a few tips for a good transition:

- Before you turn off your a/c, listen for it to complete its cycle.
- Wait five minutes after you turn the a/c off before you switch on the heat.
- Avoid drastic thermostat changes to prevent your heating system from overworking.

Failure to notice overhead power lines
could be a **deadly oversight.**



Contact us before purchasing HVAC system

Butler County REC is your trusted source for all things heating and cooling.

If you are researching HVAC systems for replacement or a new home, be sure to call Matt or Tyler to discuss your options. We are here to ensure you install the best system for your home and your family. "Butler County REC is here for our members. Whether you are considering a new furnace and central air unit or looking toward air source heat pumps, including with gas backup, or geothermal, we can help," said Matt Mahoney, energy services manager.

We also offer rebates for electric heat and central air, in addition to an electric heat rate for members installing a separate heat meter for their electric furnace, air source, or geothermal unit.

We are in business to serve you and to be a resource for you. Contact Matt or Tyler today to talk about your options!



Matt Mahoney,
energy services manager



Tyler Opperman
energy services advisor

WE ALL USE ENERGY DIFFERENTLY

We rely on our electric cooperative for information about safety, efficiency and renewables. We get expert information from our local Touchstone Energy cooperative.

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.

Drawing winners announced

Survey drawing winner

Congratulations to Deeann Ewen, Dougherty, winner of a \$200 energy bill credit. Deeann's name was drawn after she completed our database survey, administered by Inside Information, Smithville, Missouri.

The survey was conducted to help us improve our services and member communications and also to assist us and our power supplier with long-range electrical system planning.

Thank you to those members who provided information for the survey. We appreciate you taking the time to participate!

IECL contest winner

Molly Bohlen, Clarksville, was the June *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* Editor's Choice Contest winner.

Molly's name was randomly drawn as the winner of a Cuisinart electric ice cream maker. The ice cream maker makes two quarts of ice cream in 25 minutes. It also has a lid to add mix-ins such as chocolate chips and nuts. Congratulations, Molly!

Enter the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine contest each month by visiting ieclmagazine.com. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to enter. Entrant information is not shared and only one entry per account is allowed.



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