

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

January 2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Annual meeting to be business meeting only

Due to the success of our member appreciation events this past summer, the Butler County REC board of directors has elected to change the format of our annual meeting to a “business-only” meeting. Members can still attend the annual meeting, however, there will not be a meal, gifts, or entertainment. The change in format is intended to allow us to continue with member appreciation events on an annual basis.

The board recognizes that the change in format to a business-only meeting will likely cause the attendance at the meeting to decline; however, the board and employees still want all members to have an opportunity to participate. Therefore, all matters to be voted on by the members will be included on the ballot, and mail-in ballots will be accepted, as they have been the last two years. The mail-in ballots will count toward meeting quorum requirements.

The ballot will be mailed prior to the meeting. Consequently, no new actions will be acted upon at the meeting. However, as always, if members have issues to be addressed by the board or want member action taken on a matter, the issue should be brought to the attention of the board so that it may be considered and possibly included for action at a future meeting.

Be sure to read your *InTouch* newsletter and bill inserts and check our Facebook and Instagram accounts for more information. In addition, watch for your mail-in ballot to arrive in March.

Butler County REC will again hold member appreciation events in the summer of 2023, where you can enjoy food; gifts; and conversation with neighbors, employees, and board members. We look forward to seeing you at the 2023 member appreciation events!

Hire the pros

It's tempting to ask a handyman or a relative to fix an electrical problem in your home, but some jobs are better left to professionals.



Electricity can be dangerous in a home that's improperly wired; has overloaded circuits; or has exposed or defective wiring, receptacles, and switches.

Even if the job seems simple, it's better to call an experienced, licensed electrician. Most electricians have many hours of on-the-job training under the supervision of a more experienced electrician and have passed an exam.

So don't leave your electrical work to your handyman, a relative, or yourself. The money you spend hiring a professional will more than pay off in peace of mind and a safe home.

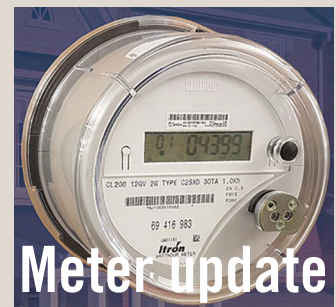


Light out?

It can be pretty dark at your property if your security light is not working.

If you contact Butler County REC to install a new light, you can count on it being an energy-efficient, 10-year warrantied LED security light. Your cost will be \$155.15 (tax included), and installation is free. When the invoice is sent to you, a rebate form will be included. After paying the invoice and returning the rebate form, you will receive a \$30 bill credit.

The light is owned by you, so if you prefer, contact an electrician to repair or replace your light.



Meter update

At the end of November, our crews and Van Wert Company employees had installed over 5,000 meters. We are well on our way to our goal of full deployment by this summer.

This winter, our crews will be working on the numerous tree maintenance requests that have come in to our office. In addition, winter weather is not always conducive to installing meters.

Call us at 888-267-2726 if you have questions.



Portable generator safety

When you have lost power, a generator can provide electricity to keep your home warm and your appliances powered. Improper use, however, may present hazards.

- Read and follow all manufacturer instructions.
- Check the cords for damage.
- Ensure the device is able to handle the wattage of the appliances that you plan to use.
- Perform regular maintenance.
- Make sure that the generator is grounded and in a dry area.
- Never connect your portable generator directly to the structure, which can result in potentially deadly backfeed.
- Shut down your generator and let it cool before refueling.
- Store your fuel away from the generator in an approved container with a charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never operate your generator near flame-producing devices.
- Never use a portable generator indoors—opening a window or door or turning on a fan will not produce enough fresh air to reduce the danger of carbon monoxide.
- Never run the generator near windows or doors.
- Clear at least three to four feet on all sides of the generator to allow for ventilation.
- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector.

Be proactive in preventing electrical fires

Take steps to help prevent electrical fires by identifying possible issues before they occur.

When assessing your home, hire a licensed electrician to check all wiring. Beyond that, watch for possible issues as they arise.

Signs of issues include flickering lights, discolored outlets and switch plates, damaged cords, frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

Check these electrically related items in your home:

1. **Electrical outlets:** Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates. If you have young children, install tamper-resistant outlets. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
2. **Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs):** Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room, workshop, basement, garage, and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the Test and Reset buttons monthly to ensure that they are working properly.
3. **Cords:** Check cords to ensure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under rugs, tightly wrapped around an object, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors, or other objects.
4. **Extension cords:** Not intended to be permanent solutions, use them temporarily. If you need more electrical outlets, consult your electrician.
5. **Light bulbs:** Verify that your light bulbs are the intended wattage for your fixture.
6. **Appliances/electronics:** If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or

gives you an electrical shock, it may be time to discard it and replace it with a new version.

Or it may be a service capacity issue (see No. 10 below).

7. **Circuit breakers/fuses:** Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuits they protect.
8. **Electrical wiring:** If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Also, check for loose wires and lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
9. **Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs):** AFCIs, which monitor the flow of electricity throughout your home, should be properly installed. If an AFCI detects any abnormality, it shuts the system off to prevent a fire. Upon inspection, an electrician can assess whether your home is properly protected.
10. **Service capacity:** If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. Contact a qualified electrician to take a look at your service.



New Year, New Savings.



Visit our website to learn about programs to help you save energy and money.

Rebates for appliances

Contact us at 888-267-2726 for information on our rebates for new, ENERGY STAR rated appliances installed at members' locations:

- Clothes dryer - \$50
- Clothes washer - \$50
- Dishwasher - \$25
- Freezer - \$25
- Refrigerator - \$25



The Energy Star label will be located in the bottom right corner of the Energy Guide.



**SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE!**

Students: Deadlines approaching!

Be sure to visit our website at www.butlerrec.coop to learn more about available opportunities and deadlines:

Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

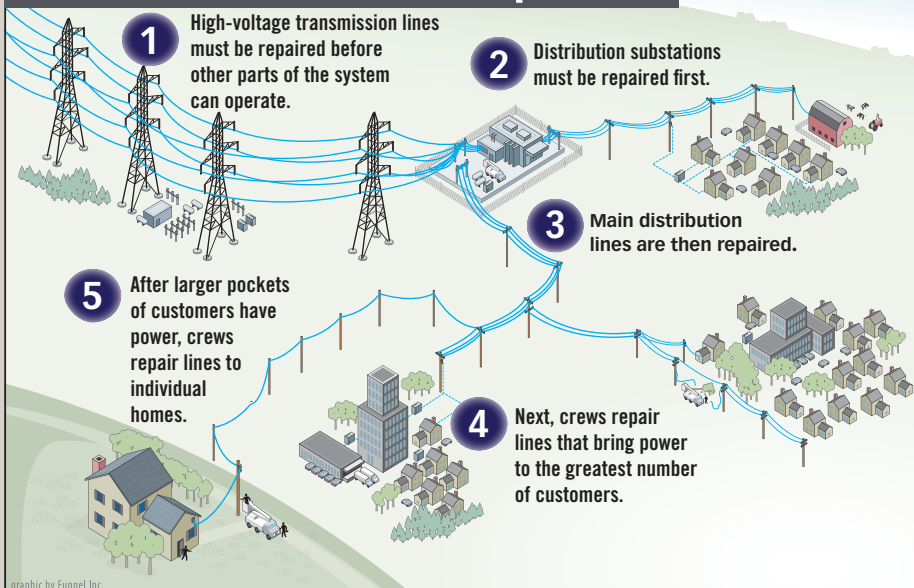
Powerline, Powerline Technology, Wiring Scholarship

Technical/Trade Industry Scholarship

Wind Energy and Turbine Scholarship

Youth Tour Trip to Washington, D.C.

How line crews restore power



When a widespread outage occurs, line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible.

Working from substations to homes results in faster repairs for the most members.

POWER OUTAGE MAP

Information about power outages affecting electric cooperative members in Iowa is available online.

To see a statewide map of power outages, visit our website: www.butlerrec.coop.

Remember to always call Butler County REC at 888-267-2726 to report an outage.

We are grateful for all that 2022 has brought to Butler County REC and thankful to have your trust in powering your lives. Join us as we reflect on the year.

MEMBERS

- Paid \$1,171,689.68 in patronage
- Energy Cost Adjustment remained the same
- Held four very successful member appreciation events
- Elena Mulder, Parkersburg, chosen for \$1,000 Basin scholarship
- Lily Mayo, Sumner, chosen for Youth Tour
- \$1,692,154.42 in margins allocated to members
- Three nominations for Shine the Light: Tom and Julie Hoodjer, Clarksville; Janet Judisch, Sumner; Linda Pruin, Clarksville
- Two \$500 scholarships announced for two students pursuing a degree in a technical/trade industry and/or electric line apprenticeship program
- 74 members donated to RECare
- Facebook reached over 1,700 likes and over 1,900 followers

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Shell Rock Soy Processing, Shell Rock, named Iowa Area Development Group Outstanding Business of the Year
- Katie LaBree, business development manager, appointed to the Empower Rural Iowa executive committee by Governor Kim Reynolds and selected to participate in Leadership Iowa
- Two Revolving Loan Fund loans financed to area businesses

OPERATIONS

- New meter deployment began in July
- Over 5,000 meters deployed by the end of November. Our crews: 4,146 meters; Van Wert Company employees: 1,138 meters
- 8.37 miles of line rebuilt through the construction work plan
- 1.51 miles of new or rebuilt overhead line constructed through work orders
- 2.5 miles of new underground line constructed
- 250 work orders completed by crews
- SRS took 2,706 calls from members and crews were dispatched for 139 calls
- Feldman switching station, Bauman and Whalen substations dedicated
- No lost-time accidents
- Received FEMA approval for 21 miles of overhead line strengthening

EMPLOYEES/DIRECTORS

- Employees volunteered 1,150.50 hours; most volunteer hours: Gary Doehrmann, 304, and John Endelman, 167.5
- Alesha Wedeking hired as billing clerk
- CEO Craig Codner named to Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange board for Region 5
- Employee-donated funds for Charity of the Year – Helping Hands Closet in Sumner
- Four directors earned Director Gold Renewal Certificates and one director earned a Board Leadership Certificate



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