

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

March 2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Business-only annual meeting to be held April 1

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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On Saturday, April 1, your board of directors will gather at 1 p.m. in the auditorium at the North Butler Elementary School, Allison, for the Butler County REC annual meeting. Members are invited to attend this business-only meeting.

The meeting will include CEO and financial reports and the election of directors. Action will not be taken at the meeting on any other matters brought before the board. Should members have an issue 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 pos-

sibly included for action at a future meeting.

We will not be offering a meal, entertainment, or gifts at the meeting. Instead, we will again hold member appreciation events this summer.

As I mentioned in your January *InTouch* newsletter, the board recognizes this new format will likely result in lower member attendance. However, all members still have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate.

One important way to participate is through voting for your directors. Mail-in ballots were sent to each member at the beginning of this month, and votes will be accepted through 3:30 p.m. on Friday, March 31, at our office in Allison. The ballots count toward meeting quorum requirements. Please be sure to mail only the ballot in the yellow envelope we provided.

Election results will be on our social media platforms and website after the April 1 meeting and will appear in your May *InTouch* newsletter. In addition, you can contact us at 888-267-2726 beginning Monday, April 3, for results.

More information regarding the member appreciation events will be available this summer. We look forward to holding these events again this year!

ECA reduction

For the last two years, the energy cost adjustment (ECA) for your power has been -.00114. This amount is reflected on your bill as "ENERGY COST ADJ."

After careful analysis of Butler County REC's year-end financial information, your board of directors has elected to adjust the ECA for 2023 with an additional reduction to -.00187. The ECA is a pass-through from our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. In other words, Corn Belt Power reduced our ECA, so we are in turn reducing our members' ECA.

Please contact us at 888-267-2726 if you have questions about the ECA factor.

When you approach a vehicle with flashers on:



MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN

CO-OPS ARE GUIDED BY 7 PRINCIPLES

- 1 **Voluntary & Open Membership**
- 2 **Democratic Member Control**
- 3 **Members' Economic Participation**
- 4 **Autonomy & Independence**
- 5 **Education, Training, & Information**
- 6 **Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- 7 **Concern for Community**

Spring cleaning = energy savings

Many of your once-a-year spring cleaning chores can save energy all year. Some examples:

- Clean windows inside and out. The cleaner the panes are, the more sunlight that can shine in, making it less necessary to turn on lights and run space heaters in the spring.
- Check the air filters in your HVAC systems monthly. If they're full of dust, dirt, and pet hair, replace the filters, because air will have a hard time passing through. Poor airflow makes your systems work harder.
- Clear fallen branches, leaves, and other debris that might have fallen on the outdoor unit of your air conditioning system over the winter.
- Dust ceiling fan blades. When the fan starts running, it can knock accumulated dust into your room, which is bad for air quality and can wind up in your air conditioner vents or filters.
- Snake your dryer vent or hire a pro to do it for you.
- Pull your refrigerator slightly out from the wall and vacuum behind it. If your fridge has exposed coils, vacuum those, too.

Play it safe around power lines

As the weather begins to warm up, our activities begin to move outside, including activities with children. Before hitting the great outdoors, discuss electrical safety with your children.



Flying fun While flying kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys, and drones, stay in large, open areas (such as parks or fields), far away from power lines. If an item becomes caught in a power line, teach children to never try to retrieve it. Instead, an adult should call their electric utility for help.

Water play When spending time by the pool, look overhead when using pool skimmers or other long objects to be sure you are not close to an overhead power line. If you are swimming and feel a prickly or tingling sensation, do not stay in the pool. There could be a stray electric current from a downed power line or a damaged electrical device. Also, never play in a flooded street or ditch; a downed power line could be hidden by the water and fallen debris.

General outdoor safety tips Other important safety guidelines for kids and adults include:

- Never throw objects at power lines.
- Stay far away from downed, damaged, or low-hanging power lines. An adult should call 9-1-1 to report a downed or damaged line.
- Be cautious after a severe storm that caused a power outage. Downed power lines could be hidden under water, snow, or storm debris. Wait to go outside until power has been restored.
- Do not climb, sit, or play on pad-mount transformers (green boxes).
- Do not climb trees that have overhead power lines near or running through them.

Prevention is key Electric shock and injuries are often preventable. Empower your family with electrical safety knowledge to avoid preventable electric injuries. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Wishing farmers a safe, successful planting season

FARMERS: When planting this spring be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is often overlooked, but can be a deadly hazard of working on a farm.

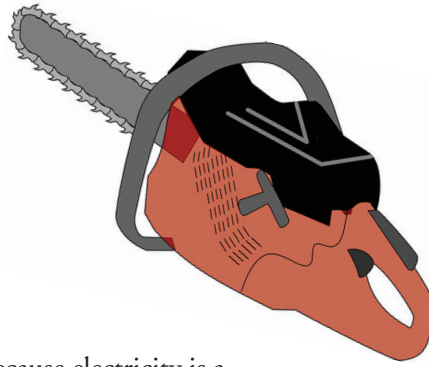
Make sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines. If your equipment should contact power lines, **stay in the cab and call for help.** If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives.

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.



Only certified workers can trim trees near power lines

Can anyone trim trees near power lines? The answer is no. Specialized tree trimmers, certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in utility clearance, are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.



OSHA requires this certification because electricity is a serious and widespread hazard to tree workers. According to the Tree Care Industry Association, electricity is the leading cause of death in the tree care industry. Tree care industry workers do not have to directly contact a power line to be electrocuted; about half of all electrocution fatalities are the result of indirect contact.

Qualified line-clearance trimmers must be specially trained in how to safely work in proximity to energized lines. They must understand how an electrical grid functions, the effects of tree growth patterns and tree damage, and how to implement directional pruning, as required by the American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations' safety standards.

According to OSHA, there are numerous duties for a certified line-clearance tree trimmer. Visit osha.gov for more information.

Contact Butler County REC at 888-267-2726 if you have questions about line-clearance tree trimmers or tree trimming near power lines.



It's time for an a/c inspection

When the weather starts to warm up—but before it is hot outside—call an air-conditioning technician to inspect your home's cooling system.

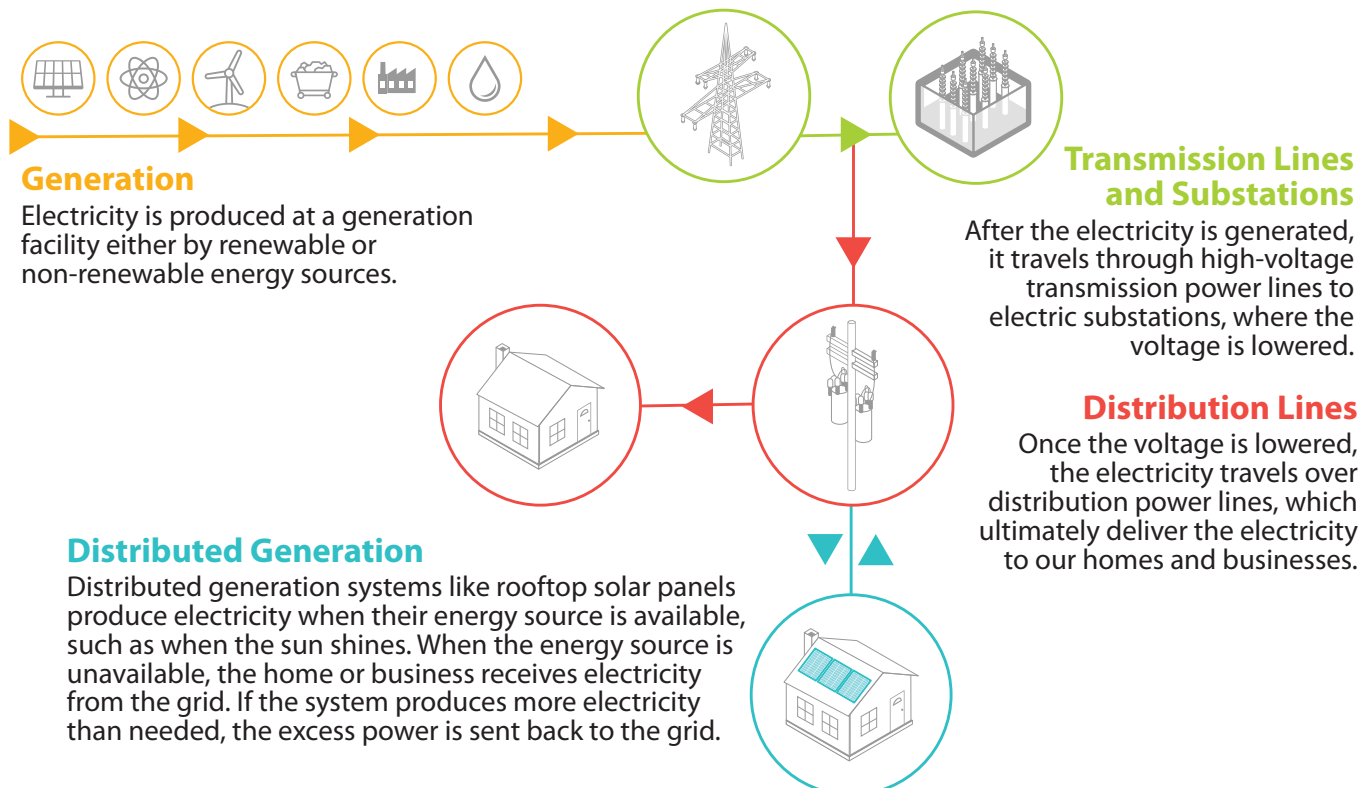
It's important to have this tune-up approximately a month before you may need your a/c.

An early check-up ensures that the a/c works on the first day when it's hot enough to need it.

The tech will clean the coils, inspect the parts, and spot any problems-in-the-making.

Once the summer heat is history, have the technician return to take a look at your heating system.

HOW ELECTRICITY REACHES YOU



Employees honored for years of service

Recently, 13 Butler County REC employees and two directors were honored for their years of service:
 10-years—Tanner Wangsness, crew chief; Alan Mayer, IT analyst; Clint Deutsch, crew chief; Craig Ohloff, crew chief; Paul Luecke, crew chief
 20-years—Matt Mahoney, energy services manager; Mandy Brouwer, billing clerk; Tim Schrage, director/board secretary
 25-years—John Groen, GIS coordinator; Lori Roose, accounting clerk; Craig Codner, CEO; Gerald Schmitt, director
 30-years—Tracy Yost, member service advisor; Abe Stirling, member service advisor
 35-years—Sandi Miller, office and human resources manager



Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our members. You are appreciated!



Boevers earns certification

Congratulations to Director Steve Boevers, Readlyn, for earning his Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA). Steve (left), pictured with Duane Rieckenberg, board president, has been a Butler County REC director since 2013.

To achieve the credential, Steve earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership Certificates from NRECA. He then completed three additional credits from the Board Leadership series. To maintain his Gold status, he must earn three more credits from the NRECA Approved List of Continuing Education programs in the two-year period from attaining his Director Gold credential.

This credential recognizes Steve's commitment to his cooperative board education and to the members of Butler County REC. Thank you, Steve!



In January, Katie LaBree, Butler County REC business development manager, closed on a \$1 million loan to assist Waverly Health Center (WHC), Waverly, with renovation costs. Corn Belt Power Cooperative also provided funding of \$360,000. WHC recently completed an over \$36 million project that included an expansion and renovations. (L to R: Katie LaBree; Lisa Bennett, CFO, WHC; Jodi Geerts, CEO, WHC; and Stacy Cirks, development finance director, Corn Belt Power)

Volunteering for our communities

At Butler County REC, we are proud of our employees' commitment to their communities. In 2022, 12 employees volunteered a total of 948.50 hours to churches, fairs, coaching, parks, and Meals on Wheels, in addition to other organizations.

Our top volunteer was Gary Doehrmann (above right), accountant, who logged 376 hours of volunteer time. Our second-place volunteer was Lori Roose (below right), accounting clerk, with 94 hours.

Gary chose St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Tennessee, to receive a \$25 donation in his honor, and Lori chose Hope Lodge, Iowa City, to receive a \$25 donation.

Thank you to our employees living our cooperative principle of Concern for Community!



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