

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

November 2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



*New Day Dairy GuestBarn, located in Clarksville, is open for overnight stays.*



*The Bolin family receives their Good Neighbor award from Secretary Mike Naig.*



*A brightly decorated sitting area on the main level of the GuestBarn.*

## Good Farm Neighbors Dan and Lynn Bolin

Butler County REC members Dan and Lynn Bolin of New Day Dairy were honored this summer as Good Farm Neighbors with a ceremony on their Clarksville farm. Nominated by the board of Butler County Farm Bureau, the Bolins, the 176th neighbors honored, are the first award recipients in Butler County in the 19 years of honorees. Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig was on hand to present the award.

The Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award nominees must meet four criteria—family operation, active in their community, produce livestock or poultry to the highest animal care standards, and dedicated to conservation and/or environmental stewardship on their land. The award is made possible through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and The Big Show on WHO Radio. Financial support comes from the Coalition to

Support Iowa's Farmers.

The Coalition supports livestock farmers in several ways, including their Green Farmstead Partner Program through which they provide guidance to livestock farmers who want to grow trees for wind breaks. The Coalition gifted the Bolins a burr oak tree from a nursery in Vinton as part of their award.

Dan and Lynn moved back to the area to begin farming with Dan's parents, Dave and Pam, in 2011. In April of 2015, construction began on their barn. By December, the first cows were moved into the structure. The cattle are milked by a robotic milker, able to milk two cows at a time.

In January of 2020, Bolins opened New Day Dairy GuestBarn on their property for people to “sleep with the cows.” The bed-and-breakfast offers two large windows in the loft area with views of the dairy barn and 150 cows. There are games, toys, and books inside the living quarters and outside there is a

grill, a porch and patio, lawn games, and a garden.

Guests can venture off-property for adventures in the area such as biking, hiking, or exploring a fossil prairie. If guests choose, up to four people can participate in the “Be a Dairy Farmer Challenge” with Dan—ride in a tractor, go in the dairy barn with the cows, milk a cow, and learn how to move cows and take them into milk, among other farm duties. Participants each receive a tee shirt and a certificate signed by “Dairy Man Dan.”

“Families are our main demographic. Lots of our guests are from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and Des Moines. Mom bloggers have been a driver for our business,” said Lynn. They have had guests from other countries, as well, and some guests have Googled “stay on a farm in Iowa” and found the GuestBarn.

Be sure to visit their website at [newdaydairy.com](http://newdaydairy.com) to view all amenities and book your stay!

**PLEASE DO NOT PUT PERSONAL MATERIALS ON POWER POLES. THIS INCLUDES: BALLOONS, FLIERS, SIGNS, FLAG HOLDERS, STAPLES, TACKS, AND NAILS.**

**POSTING ON POWER POLES CREATES A HAZARD FOR OUR LINE CREWS AND OUR MEMBERS AND COMPROMISES THE INTEGRITY OF THE POLES.**



We are proud to power not only your Thanksgiving, but your every day.

Butler County REC offices are closed Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24.

If you have an emergency or an outage, call us at 888.267.2726.

Thank you for being a member of Butler County REC. We hope you have a wonderful day celebrating all there is to be thankful for!

- High school seniors: If you live in the Butler County REC service territory and plan to pursue a degree in a technical/trade industry and/or electric line apprenticeship program that supports the cooperative business model, apply for one of two Butler County REC scholarships. Two finalists will each be awarded a \$500 college scholarship after graduation from high school and acceptance into an accredited program. Contact us at 888-267-2726 or butlerrec.coop for more information. Scholarship deadline is March 1, 2024.
- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 **Basin Electric Power Cooperative** scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college. Contact us at 888-267-2726 or visit our website for information.
- Committed to the communities it serves, Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with **Northwest Iowa Community College** (NCC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer *four \$500 scholarships to line program students* who reside in



a county served by a cooperative in the Corn Belt Power system. Applicants do not have to be cooperative members. Corn Belt Power is interested in maintaining a skilled and educated workforce to serve its members well into

the future. Recipients may be either first- or second-year students, but are eligible for only one scholarship. For more information, visit the college website at [nwicc.edu](http://nwicc.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2024.

- Corn Belt Power also partners with **Iowa Lakes Community College** in Estherville, Iowa, to offer *one \$500 scholarship for a student enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program*. The scholarship was established in 2006 and showcases Corn Belt Power's commitment to its service communities and renewable energy production. Applicants do not have to be cooperative members. Selection emphasis will be placed on candidate's potential for success and GPA. For more information, visit the college website at [iowalakes.edu](http://iowalakes.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2024.

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**Butler County REC**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Deck your halls with LED lights – and earn a rebate

It's the most wonderful time of the year and Butler County REC wants to make it even more wonderful!

When you buy LED holiday lights, fill out a form on our website at [butlerrec.coop/rebates](http://butlerrec.coop/rebates) (or use the coupon in your November REC bill) and send it in with the lighting receipt. We will then add a \$2 per string credit (not to exceed purchase price) to your next bill. Purchase as many strands as you would like—there is no limit.

LED lights use less electricity than conventional bulbs, last up to 50,000 hours or more when used outdoors and twice as long indoors, and there is no chance of combustion because the bulbs are cool to the touch.

## Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter *By Abby Berry, NRECA*

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles, and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season:

- 1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly.** Test the detectors once a month, and be sure to dust them. If battery-operated, replace the batteries annually.
- 2. Use space heaters safely.** If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Use space heaters only to heat smaller spaces. Never plug a space heater into a power strip.
- 3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips.** When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. Look for power strips that include surge protection. Also, before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked.
- 4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency.** As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney and can ignite a fire. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.
- 5. Practice safety in the kitchen.** As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards: never leave food unattended that is cooking on the stovetop, clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces, and be careful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

Butler County REC wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop) for additional safety tips.



*There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. Photo Source: Clint Patterson, Unsplash*



## High school juniors: Win a FREE trip

Is Washington, D.C. on your bucket list? If so, apply for the Youth Tour to be held June 15-21, 2024! High school juniors whose parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn are eligible.

We will select one lucky student to join approximately 40 students from Iowa and over 1,800 students from co-ops around the country to go on this all-expense paid adventure to our nation's capital. The places you will visit include the White House, the Capitol, and several monuments, and you will take a boat cruise on the Potomac River.

In addition, the top three students from Butler County REC who apply and interview will receive a \$500 college scholarship.

Be sure to check our website, Facebook page, and future newsletters for more information on how you might be able to check off this bucket-list item! You can also contact Anne at 888-267-2726 or [anne@butlerrec.coop](mailto:anne@butlerrec.coop).



*Tyler Opperman, Butler County REC member service advisor, welcomes attendees to the contractor appreciation supper.*

## Contractors' appreciation event returns after six-year hiatus

At Butler County REC, we consider our contractors to be an extension of our business. As a thank you, we held a contractors' appreciation supper this fall at the Waverly Area Veterans Post.

Butler County REC employees served the group of around 100 people who enjoyed a meal catered by Frederika Locker, Frederika, and Nancy Kannegieter, Parkersburg.

Speakers included Craig Codner, CEO; John Endelman, operations manager; Matt Mahoney, energy services manager; and Ross Welterlen, energy management engineer for Corn Belt Power Cooperative. Tyler Opperman, energy services advisor for Butler County REC, opened the evening by welcoming guests and closed the evening by thanking those attending.

"We offer several rebates to help our members with the cost of their energy-efficient purchases, and contractors are often the first contact our members have when making decisions on heating and cooling. We know we can rely on contractors to inform our members of our programs and services, and we appreciate all they do for our members and for Butler County REC," said Mahoney.

### Serving up Savings By Anne Prince, NRECA

The holiday season is just around the corner, bringing a frenzy of decorating, cooking, and family gatherings, and during this busy time, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills. The following are reminders of a few programs and tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

**Programs designed to help you save.** Contact Matt or Tyler to schedule a free home energy audit and discuss specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

**Be festive without breaking the bank.** LED holiday lights use 88 percent less energy than incandescent holiday lights and are shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch. Smart light timers can also help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times.

**Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.** If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, use small countertop appliances when possible. When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills.



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