

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

January 2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Business-only annual meeting to be held in March

Butler County REC's business-only annual meeting will be held Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at the Allison warehouse, 619 N. Railroad St., at 1:00 p.m. Members can still attend the meeting, however, there will not be a meal, gifts, or entertainment.

Mail-in ballots will be sent to the membership prior to the meeting. All matters to be voted on by the membership will be on the ballot, including director elections. Due to the mailing of the ballots, 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.

To stay up-to-date on the latest regarding the meeting, read your *InTouch* newsletter and bill inserts and check our Facebook and Instagram accounts. Watch for your ballot to arrive in March.

Butler County REC will again hold member appreciation events this summer, where we will provide food, gifts, and comradery. We look forward to seeing you at the 2024 member appreciation events!



John Endelman



Matt Rowell

Employees honored for service

John Endelman, operations manager, and Matt Rowell, coordinating crew chief, were honored recently at the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's annual meeting. Both have served Butler County REC members for 25 years.

Craig Codner, CEO, said of John, "In John's position as operations manager, his unwavering dedication to a culture of safety has been paramount at Butler County REC. He holds himself accountable and expects his co-workers to do the same. John continually shows his dedication to the cooperative and community through his willingness to do what is best for the cooperative and our members."

John, Matt's supervisor, stated, "Matt never wavers in his commitment to the REC and our members. We can always count on him to be accountable and responsible."

Congratulations, and thank you!



Deadlines approaching

- Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship: Feb. 1, 2024
- Butler County REC Technical/Trade Industry Scholarship: March 1, 2024
- Powerline, Powerline Technology, Wiring Scholarship: March 1, 2024
- Wind Energy and Turbine Scholarship: March 1, 2024
- Youth Tour Trip to Washington, D.C.: March 1, 2024

Have you checked out the SmartHub enhancements?

In December, our online payment system SmartHub was enhanced to make it easier for you to manage your Butler County REC account. Take a look at all that is available on SmartHub:

DASHBOARD

- Quick links that will lead you to the other features of SmartHub
- Usage Overview graphs to help you understand your energy usage trends
- The latest communications and alerts from us
- Pay button

BILL AND PAY

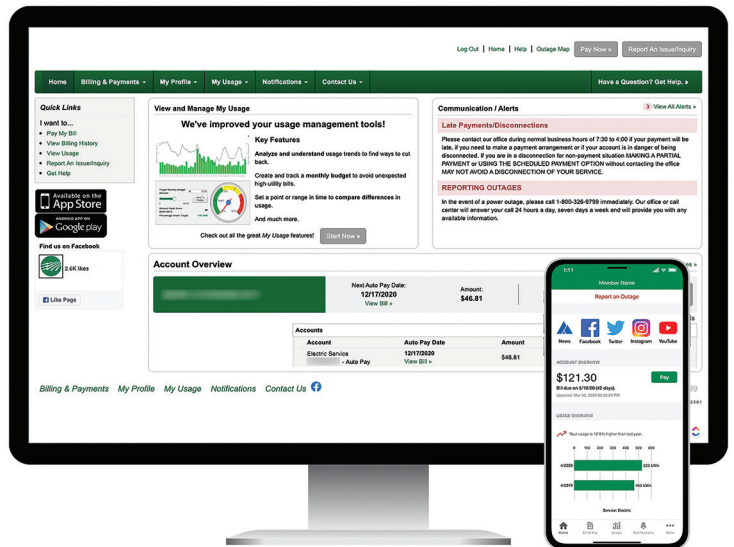
- Enroll in auto pay: Just click the Enroll link next to your account(s)
- View Bill and View Usage links; Total Due column reflects adjustments made since the last billing
- Summary of all registered accounts
- Payment history

USAGE

- See how much electricity you typically use during a specific period
- Compare two monthly bills side-by-side
- Explore your past and current usage with Usage Explorer
- Usage Management helps you evaluate ways to save usage and money

CONTACT US

- Our address, phone numbers, and maps in one convenient location
- Report a problem with your service or submit a general inquiry



eral inquiry

SETTINGS

- Manage your billing address, contact information, and notifications
- Create a unique meter description
- Set up paperless billing
- Add existing accounts and users, remove accounts, delete registrations
- Manage your password and your login email address
- Select your login hint question
- Update your security phrase
- Store payment accounts
- Enter a two-factor authentication code

If you are a registered user, look around. If you have not yet registered, consider doing so. You will need your email address and Butler County REC account number (found on the top right of your bill). You can then activate the features you want. Be sure to download the app on your phone, too.

Congratulations to...

Nathan Stauffer of Greene! Nathan was the September *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* Editor's Choice contest winner. His name was randomly drawn to receive an Ambient Weather personal weather station.

Enter the magazine's contest each month by visiting ieclmagazine.com. Entrant information is not shared and only one entry per account is allowed.



Jo Groth of Plainfield! Jo's recipe for ham rolls was published in *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine's October issue. Jo won a \$25 Butler County REC bill credit.

See page 9 of the magazine each month for the recipe theme and how to enter. And visit ieclmagazine.com for recipe ideas from cooperative members across our state. You just might find a new favorite!

When you approach a vehicle with flashers on:



MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN

BCREC Year-in-Review: 2023

MEMBERS

- Annual meeting was business only
- Almost 600 mail-in ballots returned for director election
- Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) reduction
- Basin winner: Alaina Steffen, New Hartford
- Youth Tour winner: Colton Zupke, Fredericksburg
- BCREC scholarship winner: Dawson Testroet, Greene
- \$2,881,026.60 allocated to members
- \$1,151,463.21 returned to members
- Caleb Sinnwell placed third at national contest for his electric cooperative history website
- Over 1,400 meals served at three member appreciation events: Nashua, Tripoli, Allison
- SmartHub bill pay enhanced for members
- One organization and eight individuals nominated for third annual Shine the Light contest—including one of three winners, Betty Thronson, Project Flo, Chickasaw County
- Members Dan and Lynn Bolin, New Day Dairy, Clarksville, named first Butler County Good Neighbor Award recipients
- 76 members donated to RECare
- Around 100 people attended first contractors' appreciation supper since 2017
- Facebook: 2,002 followers, 1,797 likes
- Instagram: 117 followers

OPERATIONS

- Meter deployment completed – over 5,000 meters in 11 months
- 12.31 miles of line rebuilt through construction work plan
- 1.75 miles of new or rebuilt overhead line constructed through work orders
- 3.64 miles of single-phase line converted to three-phase line for new three-phase loads
- 2.09 miles of new underground line constructed
- 150 work orders completed
- 18 of 39 FEMA work orders completed
- SRS took 2,090 calls from members, and crews were dispatched for 119 calls
- No lost-time accidents



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Closed on three Revolving Loan Funds
- Closed on two pass-through loans
- Katie LaBree completed Leadership Iowa
- Shell Rock Soy Processing became fully operational
- Began work with several communities on housing and daycare initiatives
- Seven USDA REDLG loans were rewarded or applied for



BCREC and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Humboldt, provided loans to Waverly Health Center for an addition.

L to R: Katie LaBree, business development manager, BCREC; Lisa Bennett, CFO, Waverly Health Center; Jodi Geerts, CEO, Waverly Health Center; Stacy Cirks, development finance director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative

EMPLOYEES/DIRECTORS

- Honored for years of service: Sandi Miller– 35; Abe Stirling, Tracy Yost – 30; John Endelman, Matt Rowell – 25; Mandy Brouwer, Matt Mahoney, Tim Schrage – 20; Clint Deutsch, Paul Luecke, Alan Mayer, Craig Ohloff, Tanner Wangsness – 10
- Lee Frerichs earned journeyman lineman status
- Steve Boevers earned Directors Gold credential
- Volunteer hours: 948.50
- Shane Usher and Cade Bennett joined BCREC
- Janis Cramer retired after almost 40 years at REC
- Mike Miller named Butler County Relay for Life honorary survivor
- BCREC completed the 10 NRECA Co-op Cyber Goals
- RUS completed a successful Loan Fund and Accounting Review and found BCREC compliant with requirements



Turn it down

Saving energy during the winter doesn't have to mean feeling cold in your own home. Here are five free ways to lower your energy bill while staying comfortable indoors.

- **Lower the temperature** in your home by just a single degree. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates you can save 3% on your heating bill for every degree you set your thermostat back during the winter—if you leave it there.
- **Turn off exhaust fans** in the kitchen and bathroom as soon as the steam or cooking smells are gone. It takes only one hour for those fans to blow the warm air out of your house, so use them only as needed.
- **Close the fireplace damper** when you're not burning a fire. An open damper is a hole in your house that sucks heated air out and draws cold winter air in.
- **Move furniture and rugs away** from heating vents so air can circulate freely around the room. That will make your heating system's work a lot easier.
- **Open the curtains** on south-facing windows on sunny days so the sun's warm rays can radiate into your home. Close the curtains at night to help trap that heat indoors.

LED holiday light rebate available

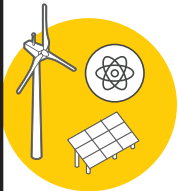
Did you buy holiday lights or decorations?

Visit butlerrec.coop for a lighting rebate form to receive up to \$2 per strand.

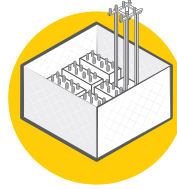
Purchase as many as you like—there is no limit!



HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOU



step 1
Generation
Electricity is generated from various sources.



step 5
Distribution Substation
Voltage is lowered further for safe distribution.



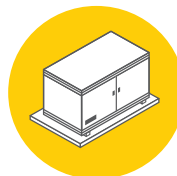
step 2
Step-Up Transformer
Voltage is increased to push the electricity over long distances.



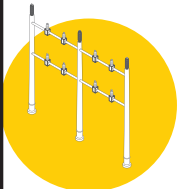
step 6
Distribution Power Lines
Electricity travels across these lines in your community.



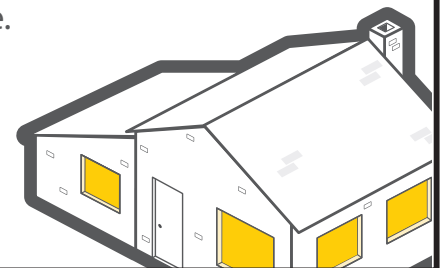
step 3
Transmission Power Lines
Lines carry electricity over long distances.



step 7
Final Stop
A transformer reduces voltage a final time, and electricity is sent to your home.



step 4
Transmission Substation
Voltage is lowered so electricity can travel across the local system.



INtouch is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative
521 North Main • PO Box 98 • Allison, IA 50602
PHONES: 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726 • FAX: 319.267.2566
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
WEBSITE: www.butlerrec.coop • E-MAIL: butler@butlerrec.coop
Craig Codner, CEO • EDITOR: Anne Gardiner, CCC



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