

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

March 2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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Wednesday, March 27, 2024, your board of directors will convene at 1 p.m. at the Butler County REC warehouse in Allison at 619 N. Railroad St. to hold your annual meeting.

Business-only annual meeting to be held March 27

Members are invited to attend the business-only meeting, which includes the election of directors. The meeting will be similar to last year's event.

One of our seven cooperative principles is Democratic Member Control. This means you vote for the directors who govern the board. 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 Tuesday, March 26, at our office in Allison. The ballots count toward meeting quorum requirements.

Election results will be on our social media platforms and website after the March 27 meeting and will appear in your May *InTouch* newsletter. Feel free

to contact us at 888.267.2726 beginning Thursday, March 28, for meeting results.

Action will not be taken at the annual 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 possibly included for action at a future meeting.

Butler County REC will again hold member appreciation events this summer, so the annual meeting will not include a meal, entertainment, or gifts.

Watch for more information on our member appreciation events—we look forward to seeing you!



**NEW
PAY-BY-PHONE
NUMBER:
855-918-3803**

On March 7, 2024, Butler County REC's Pay-by-Phone number changed to 855-918-3803. Members whose accounts have been set up on Pay-by-Phone will not need to re-register. If you want to set up a Pay-by-Phone account, be sure to follow the prompts. Contact us at 888.267.2726 with questions.

You are a business owner

Every consumer who buys electricity from an electric cooperative owns the electric cooperative. That makes you a business owner!

The cooperative business model revolves around consumer ownership—considered “members” and “owners.”

Board members are members and owners, too. You can run for a seat on the board of directors and/or vote during the election of board members.

So, exercise your right to vote. It's your right as a consumer, a member, and an owner of Butler County REC.

ECA adjustment

After careful analysis of Butler County REC's year-end financial information, your board of directors has elected to adjust the farm/residential energy cost adjustment (ECA) for 2024 to $-.00177$ and the electric heat ECA (does not include storage heat) to $.00232$.

The ECA is a pass-through from our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. In other words, Corn Belt Power adjusted our ECAs, so we are in turn adjusting our members' ECAs. This amount is reflected on your bill as “ENERGY COST ADJ.”

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



Employees show Commitment to Community

Six Butler County REC employees volunteered a total of 632 hours in 2023, helping with churches, little league, a wrestling tournament, coaching, RAGBRAI, a fire department, concessions, a fair, and an after-prom.

Gary Doehrmann, accountant, logged the most hours with 309.

Lori Roose, accounting clerk, volunteered 113 hours for second place. Gary chose Retrieving Freedom, LLC, Waverly, to receive a \$25 donation in his name, while Lori chose St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.



EV and solar calculators available

Butler County REC recently added two calculators to our website (www.butlerrec.coop) to help members make informed decisions on whether an electric vehicle (EV) and/or solar installation fit your energy needs.

The EV calculator is under Energy Solutions – For Members – Electric Vehicles, while the solar calculator can be found under Energy Solutions – Renewable Energy – Solar Calculator.

If you have questions about EVs or solar installation, contact Matt or Tyler in our office at 888.267.2726.

Springtime brings out scammers

Springtime is coming, and so are the scammers.

Impersonators will ask you for everything, from making good on a supposedly overdue bill to paying upfront to replace your electric meter. They might tell you about a fantastic new program designed to save you energy and ask you for your personal information to sign up—including your bank account or credit card number.

Don't fall for it. Here's what to be on the lookout for:

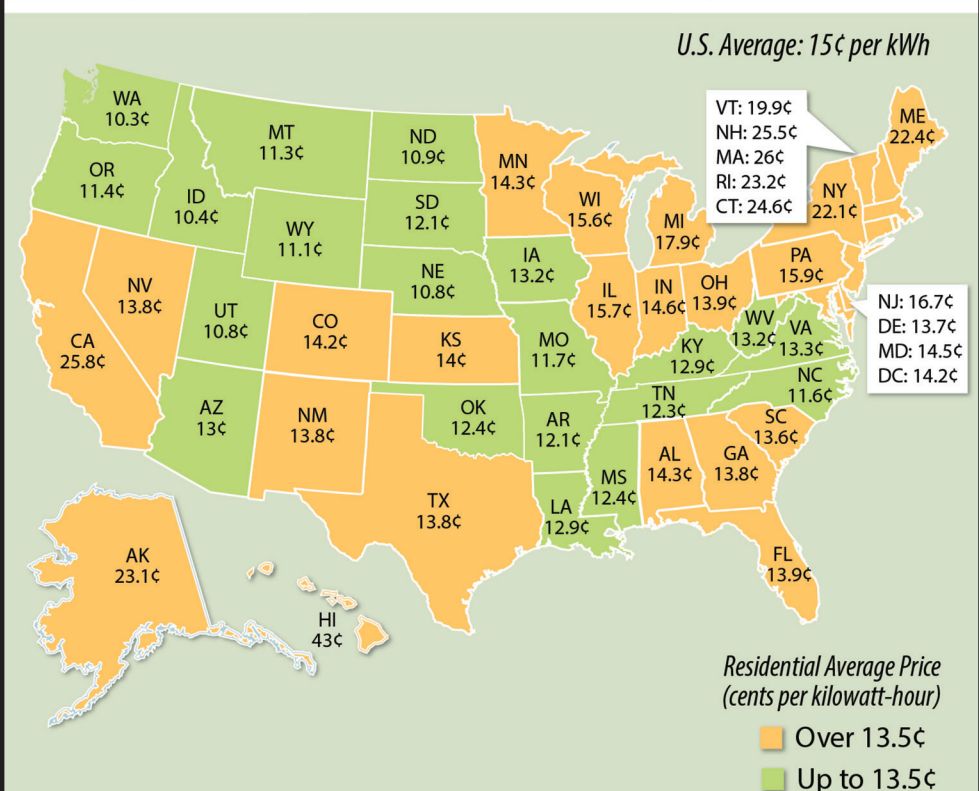
- Someone who calls on the phone might convince you that you've overpaid your electric bill and ask for your bank account or credit card number for a refund. Butler County REC will never ask for payment information over the phone.
- A scammer who shows up at your home claiming to be a utility worker might offer to do a free energy audit and then ask for your credit card number to pay for additional services.
- Never agree to pay by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, a gift card, or a cash-reload card. Those are sure signs you're being scammed.

If you believe someone is falsely representing themselves as an employee of Butler County REC, report the visit to us and to the authorities.



Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2022 figures, in cents per kWh



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration
Numbers rounded to nearest tenth of a cent

Farmers: Remember safety this planting season

As planting season nears, here are some agriculture-related facts from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF):

- Each year, one U.S. farm feeds 166 people domestically and abroad. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050. This means that the world's farmers will have to grow approximately 70% more food than what they produce today.
- Two million farms dot America's rural landscape, according to the AFBF, and 98% are operated by individuals, families, and family-run partnerships or corporations.
- Eighty-six percent of U.S. agricultural products are produced on family farms or ranches.
- Americans throw away approximately 25% of the food they buy to eat at home.
- Women make up 36% of the total number of farm operators in the U.S.; 56% of all farms have at least one female decision-maker.

As farmers return to their fields this spring, Butler County REC urges all workers to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Follow these safety tips:

- Determine power line locations before going out into the fields, and designate preplanned routes that avoid hazardous areas.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds and be cognizant of tall antennas.
- Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines.
- Do not attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Coming too close to a power line while working can be just as dangerous as contacting one because electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects.
- Non-metallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay, will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.
- When grounded wires that stabilize poles, known as guy wires, are broken, they become hazardous. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call us. Do not fix it yourself.
- When it comes to dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call Butler County REC.
- If your equipment contacts a power line, stay in the cab, warn others, and call 9-1-1 or Butler County REC for help.
- If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump — not step — with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop away from the area as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. If you are unable to hop, then shuffle with the insides of your feet touching. Do not return to the equipment until the power has been deenergized.

Start each day with a safety meeting to alert everyone to potential hazards and how to avoid them. Managers and owners should make sure family members and staff, including seasonal workers, are educated on these safety precautions.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

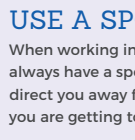
SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.



USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.

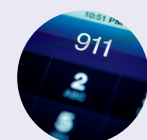


DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machinery or truck makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with your feet together as far as you can.



Learn more at:

[SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org)

Take steps now for a more comfortable and efficient cooling season

With winter almost behind us and spring on tap, now is the perfect time to ready your home for warmer weather:

- **Clean your air conditioner.** Blocked or dirty air filters and outside condenser coils can reduce your system's ability to push and pull air through vents. Schedule an appointment with a professional for a service check.
- **Make sure air leaks are sealed.** Inspect caulking around windows, doors, and any openings into the home.
- **Check insulation around windows and doors.**
- **Consider having your ductwork sealed and insulated.**
- **Change the direction of your ceiling fan blades** to blow air down to give the room a breeze and make it feel cooler while allowing you to leave your air conditioner set a little higher.
- **Clean your dryer vents.**
- **Make sure that air movement in and around the condensing unit is not blocked** by shrubs causing premature fan and compressor failure.
- **Consider installing an attic fan or vent** to cool a hot attic by drawing in cooler outside air from attic vents (soffit and gable) and pushing hot air to the outside. Make sure your attic soffit vents aren't blocked, as well.

Taking time to prepare your home and equipment can help keep you and your family safe and help you save energy and money, too.

POWERING LIVES

Not everyone starts their day at the same time, or in the same way. But no matter when or how, your local Touchstone Energy cooperative is there to help you power every moment of it.

To learn more, visit TouchstoneEnergy.com

YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND INFORMATION.



Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperatives

INtouch is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

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