

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

May 2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Counting the mail-in ballots prior to your 2024 annual meeting were members (l to r): Cheryle Arjes, Terri Behnke, Raymond Dietz, Duane Folkerts, and Jon Oltmann.

Your 2024 executive committee is (front row, l to r) Share Brandt, vice president; Gary Poppe, president; Troy Feldman, treasurer; (back row, l to r) Tim Schrage, secretary; Allyn Harms, asst. sec'y-treasurer.

## BCREC annual meeting held

The afternoon of Wednesday, March 27, your Butler County REC (BCREC) board of directors met at the Allison warehouse to conduct the annual meeting.

Prior to the meeting, election tellers, along with corporate attorney Kyle Kruidenier, opened and counted the almost 500 mail-in ballots to establish the results of the election. The tellers were members Cheryle Arjes, Terri Behnke, Raymond Dietz, Duane Folkerts, and Jon Oltmann, along with BCREC employees.

Results of the election were announced during the meeting. Members re-elected Share Brandt, Allison, and Troy Feldman, Greene. Ken Kappmeyer, Waverly, was elected to his first three-year director term, filling the seat of Duane Rieckenberg, Ionia, who retired from the board after 45 years.

Following the meeting, the board of directors held their organizational meeting and elected the following officers: Gary

Poppe, Nashua, president; Share Brandt, Allison, vice president; Troy Feldman, Greene, treasurer; Tim Schrage, Allison, secretary; and Allyn Harms, Clarksville, assistant secretary-treasurer.

The annual report was included in your April *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine and is also available on our website at [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop), About Us, Board and Mission.

Thank you to our members returning their ballots, to the tellers for their assistance, and to Duane Rieckenberg for his dedication and service to our members. We appreciate your commitment to your cooperative!



Newly elected board member Ken Kappmeyer.

## 45 years of service to our members

Duane Rieckenberg (right, presiding over his final annual meeting), Butler County REC board president, has retired from the board after serving our members for 45 years. During his tenure, our members saw numerous advancements, including many new substations, building of the Horton warehouse and two Butler County REC-owned solar arrays, creation of our USDA revolving loan fund, and the launch of member appreciation events.

Duane earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate, Board Leadership Certificate, and Director Gold Credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

At the annual meeting, Duane, whose father also served on the board, stated that he has appreciated the opportunity. "The employees are great; the board is very good. It's been a pleasure."

Congratulations, Duane. We are thankful for and appreciate your service, insights, and dedication. It's been a pleasure for us, too!



## Stirling retires from REC

When Abe Stirling started at Butler County REC over 31 years ago, he did not have line crew experience. His supervisor at the time, former operations manager Karl Heyenga, said, “I can teach you to be a lineman but I can’t teach you to work.”

Abe didn’t have to be taught how to work. At the time of his hiring, he was employed full-time at Henke Manufacturing and part-time with Tatroe Electric. And he learned to be a lineman through observing his fellow crew members and participating in the four-year Merchant Program. On being taught to be a lineman he commented, “Everyone was so helpful teaching me the trade and teaching me everything they knew.”

After serving our members for 18 years on the line crew, Abe moved into a member services role, helping our members with new builds and modifications, working with contractors, and staking for new power lines and power line extensions.

Over the years, he has appreciated the employee empowerment at the REC. “Employees are not just a number or a name. We are actually somebody at the REC,” he stated.

Abe will be spending his retirement hunting pheasant and fishing, but he will miss working with the line crews every day. “It’s a great co-op. The employees work hard for the members.”

Congratulations, Abe!



**Every month, almost 70 members of Butler County REC contribute to RECare, our members-helping-members program. Funds through RECare are distributed by local community action agencies to help pay heating bills and to assist in the weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.**

**If you would like to contribute, please call us at 888-267-2726, or visit our website at [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop).**

## Shining the light on community volunteers in June

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Butler County REC encourages our members to participate in the statewide Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the contest will accept nominations in June and select three winners who will each receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

“We’ve been truly inspired by the growth of this contest in our first three years,” remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. “We’re increasing our three charity donations to \$3,000 each this year to encourage even more participation across the state.”

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa’s electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. If you receive electricity from Butler County REC, you’re a co-op member-consumer and we invite you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The three winners will be announced in September and featured in Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine and on social media.

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) to review the contest rules and submission guidelines. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination.





# Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship winners announced

**Aiden Sullivan** A senior at Nashua-Plainfield High School, Aiden Sullivan was chosen as Butler County REC's \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship recipient. He is planning to attend either West Point Academy, West Point, New York, for mechanical engineering, or Hawkeye Community College to become an electrician.

On being awarded the scholarship, Aiden said, "I am honored to have received the Butler County REC Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship. Thank you!"

Aiden has been involved in numerous activities during his high school career, including 4-H, FFA, National Honor Society, athletics, band, Husky Leadership Team, church youth group, and a number of additional activities and volunteering. He has also been employed during this time.

Aiden's parents are Andrea and Brian Sullivan, Nashua.

***Congratulations, Aiden!***

**Colton Zupke** Congratulations to Colton Zupke, a senior at Sumner-Fredericksburg High School, for being chosen as Corn Belt Power Cooperative's \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship recipient. He is also the recipient of a \$500 scholarship from Butler County REC as the 2023 Youth Tour attendee.

He plans to attend Iowa State University, Ames, to major in agricultural engineering and agronomy. His goal is to design and build more efficient and environmentally sound farm equipment and continue to work on his family's farm.

Colton is very thankful for the award and the help it will provide him toward his goals. Very active during high school in athletics, National Honor Society, and FFA, Colton is the son of Ryan and Ann Zupke, Fredericksburg.

***Best of luck, Colton!***



## COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Effective May 22, 1991, the Iowa Utilities Board passed a ruling requiring all non-rate regulated utilities to post the following notice to its memberships: If a member-consumer has a question or concern regarding his/her electric service, please write or call your local electric cooperative at the following address or phone number:

**Butler County REC**  
521 N. Main Street, PO Box 98  
Allison, IA 50602-0098  
(319) 267-2726  
www.butlerrec.coop

If your complaint is related to your cooperative's service rather than its rates, and your cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 1-877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by email to [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).

## BCREC scholarships awarded

Congratulations to Griffin Buss and Macy Endelman, both awarded \$500 scholarships from Butler County REC.

Griffin, from Allison and a North Butler High School student, is the recipient of our technical/trade scholarship. He will be attending powerline school at Des Moines Area Community College in the fall. He is the son of Shane and Lori Buss.

Macy, also from Allison and a North Butler High School student, is the recipient of our employee/director scholarship. She will be attending Iowa State University in the fall, majoring in pre-physical therapy and minoring in exercise science. She is the daughter of John and Beth Endelman. John is the Butler County REC operations manager.

***Best wishes,  
Griffin and Macy!***



# Butler County REC 2023 years of service awards

45

Duane Rieckenberg,  
board president

40

Gary Poppe, board vice-  
president

25

John Endelman,  
operations manager  
Matt Rowell,  
coordinating crew chief

20

Derek Buss, meter technician  
Anne Gardiner,  
public relations specialist

15

Chris Wehling,  
coordinating crew chief

10

Tyler Aukes, crew chief  
Steve Boevers, board director  
Allyn Harms, board director  
Mike Miller,  
mechanic/warehouseman

5

Share Brandt,  
board asst. secretary/treasurer  
Troy Feldman, board treasurer  
Lee Frerichs, crew chief



## Sinnwell to attend Youth Tour

Butler County REC is proud to announce that Caleb Sinnwell, a junior from Nashua-Plainfield High School, will be representing the cooperative at the 2024 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 15-21. He is the son of members Heather and Josh Sinnwell of Nashua.



Caleb is active in numerous school and extra-curricular activities and has received many awards and honors throughout his high school career. He also enjoys working on his grandparents' hog farm.

In addition, he developed a website, "With the Flip of a Switch on the Rural Frontier: REA Lights the Way," on the history of rural electric cooperatives. For his work, Caleb earned a bronze medal at the National History Day National Contest in June of last year. The website can be viewed on Butler County REC's website, [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop), under About Us.

Caleb has been heavily involved in the lobbying of Congress to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II Ghost Army. In March, his efforts came to fruition when he attended the award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

When told he had been awarded the all-expense paid Youth Tour trip, Caleb said, "THANK YOU SO MUCH! I have been dreaming of this for years! I am so excited to represent Butler County REC for the 2024 Youth Tour!"

Caleb will join students from more than 40 additional electric cooperatives in Iowa and over 1,800 students from across America to explore our nation's capital. The fast-paced informative week gives the students a better understanding of the role electric cooperatives play in our country.

**Butler County REC will be closed on  
Monday, May 27, in honor of the U.S.  
military personnel who died while serving  
in the United States Armed Forces.**



remember & honor

**MEMORIAL  
DAY**

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 • PAY-BY-PHONE: 855.918.3803 • FAX: 319.267.2566  
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
WEBSITE: [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop) • E-MAIL: [butler@butlerrec.coop](mailto:butler@butlerrec.coop)  
Craig Codner, CEO • EDITOR: Anne Gardiner, CCC



Follow us on Facebook at  
[facebook.com/bcrec](https://facebook.com/bcrec)



Follow us on Instagram at  
[instagram.com/butlercountyrec](https://instagram.com/butlercountyrec)



Pay your bill online  
with SmartHub

**smart choices** Sign up for our e-newsletter at [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.