



## MEMBER SMART CORNER

To keep our members up to date as ECI REC transitions to smart meters, here are answers to a few of the most frequently asked questions about the new system.

**Q: Can anyone other than ECI REC read the new meters?**

**A:** The manufacturer has incorporated security features and encryption technology into the meter. While the meter display is visible so members can check their consumption, the meters are sealed and the information and data stored within them can only be accessed with special software.

**Q: Could the new meters impact my health?**

**A:** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) establishes requirements for acceptable RF exposure limits. Smart meters comply with and exceed these requirements. Smart meters present significantly lower RF exposure than cell phones and wireless routers.

To view the full smart meter FAQ sheet, visit [ecirec.coop/smartmeterinstall/FAQ](http://ecirec.coop/smartmeterinstall/FAQ).

## We're always thinking of ways to help members save electricity... and then we thought, why stop there?

To help our members save money on goods and services of all kinds, we started the Co-op Connections® program.

**There are six ways to save!**

32,000 local and national business offerings are available for card holders.



Support these local businesses by using your Co-op Connections Card.

Emmy Lou Candles | Polar Blair's Den | BEST WESTERN PLUS Independence Inn & Suites | Bill's Pizza & Smokehouse | Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances | E & TNAPA Auto Parts | Fabulous Fridays | Heartland Acres Agribition Center | In the Country Garden & Gifts | Michael & Dowd | Office Towne, Inc. | Okoboji Grill | Styles Unlimited | Berry's Lanes, Inc. | Cameron Clothing Company | Clingman Pharmacy, Inc. | Frazier Nursery | Henkle Creek Mercantile | Modern Motel | Subway | Viking Sewing Center | *The NEWS/Buchanan County Review*



Questions? Need a card?  
[lisa.franck@ecirec.coop](mailto:lisa.franck@ecirec.coop)  
or 319-443-3574

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# Cedar Valley Co-Ops Co-Host Legislative Event

On December 5, ten representatives from Butler County REC, Grundy County REC, and East-Central Iowa REC co-hosted a legislative forum at the Isle Casino in Waterloo with the Isle, the Cedar Valley Manufacturers Network, and the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber. State legislators Sen. Bill Dotzler (D), Rep. Ras Smith (R), Rep. Timi Brown-Powers (R), Rep. Pat Grassley (R), Rep. Bob Kressig (D), and Rep. Walt Rogers (R) attended, as did ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow.

Sponsors gave brief presentations outlining concerns and objectives regarding business policies for the upcoming year. Vicki Daily from Grundy County REC presented for the co-ops; Sen. Dotzler, Rep. Kressig, and Rep. Rogers gave five-minute talks about their respective parties' agendas on behalf of the lawmakers.

The cooperative group has participated in this event for several years, and it has been beneficial. Interactions with the legislators are productive; co-ops have been successful in ensuring lawmakers are aware of the issues rural Iowa faces, even though their backgrounds are largely urban.



## Powering Safely During an Outage

Given our dependence on electricity, it's understandable why portable generators are so popular. However, generators can cause more harm than good if not used properly. To protect yourself and the line workers who restore your power after an outage, keep the following safety guidelines in mind.

Never plug a portable generator directly into one of your home's outlets unless a licensed electrician has installed a transfer switch in your home. If you don't have a transfer switch, the generator can backfeed along power lines, which can electrocute a line worker working on those lines.

Generators create carbon monoxide, so they must go outside in a dry area at least 15 feet away from your home's vents, windows, and doors. Attached garages with an open door don't count—the carbon monoxide can still seep indoors and poison inhabitants.

Plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords, but don't overload. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maximum load.

Shut off the generator before refueling, or a fire could start—and it's a good idea to have a fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

Safety is a top priority at ECI REC, for our employees and members alike. Contact us at 877-850-4343 if you'd like to learn more about how to properly install and use a portable generator.

## 2018 State Legislative Agenda

### We support:

- » **Safety & Reliability Measures** - We support safety efforts to utilize industry expertise to better protect our line personnel and our members and their families, as well as our grid infrastructure assets.
- » **Energy Efficiency Modernization** - We support efforts to modernize and "right-size" energy efficiency programs to better serve members and to make these programs as cost-effective as possible.
- » **Renewable Energy Incentives** - We support efforts to extend and refocus tax incentives for renewable energy technologies that benefit all ratepayers throughout the utility's delivery system.



## Six Years of Facebook!

Help us celebrate by checking out our page, if you have not already done so. Go to [facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec](https://www.facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec) and like our page to get our posts about outages, safety tips, and more on your News Feed today!

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



Your Co-op Connections® Card offers you Healthy Savings and local and national deals. Use your card to start saving today! Questions? Email [coopconnections@ecirec.coop](mailto:coopconnections@ecirec.coop).



Use SmartHub to pay for FREE online! Discover, Visa, and MasterCard accepted. While you're there, view your monthly usage data in helpful chart formats.



Click the Energy Resource Center icon at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) to get electronics advice, access reference tools, and break down your monthly energy costs via a home energy advisor.