

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

HONORING
85 YEARS

A Trip of a Lifetime

Story on page 3

Photo credit: LAEC

WEBINAR FOR YOUNG LEADERS

page 4

AirPods and a scholarship
up for grabs!

FUN AT THE FAIR

page 4

We loved connecting with you
at the Benton and Buchanan
County Fairs!



WEATHERIZATION

page 7

Incentives for members and
LIHEAP information.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

page 8

Our loans support the
local economy.



CLOSED – Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4

CLOSED – Friday, Nov. 10 to honor Veterans Day

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS

memberservices@ecirec.coop
(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop
(billing, new customers)

WEBSITE
www.ecirec.coop

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Teresa Floyd
Chief Executive Officer
Ext. 450
teresa.floyd@ecirec.coop

Jennifer Schmitz
Manager of Finance
Ext. 427
jennifer.schmitz@ecirec.coop

Tom Schmitt
Operations Manager
Ext. 519
tom.schmitt@ecirec.coop

Adam Albertsen
Manager of Member Service
Ext. 503
adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop

Lisa Franck
Manager of Communications
Ext. 472
lisa.franck@ecirec.coop

Nathan Groom
Information Services Manager
Ext. 410
nathan.groom@ecirec.coop

ADDRESS
2400 Bing Miller Lane
PO Box 248
Urbana, IA
52345-0248

PHONE
319-443-4343

TOLL FREE
877-850-4343

FAX 319-443-4359

HOURS

Monday-Friday
Office: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

Get Your Newsletter in Your Inbox

Email Lisa Franck in Member Communications (lisa.franck@ecirec.coop) to begin receiving the *Heartland Link* as a PDF in your inbox. We can also stop postal delivery—just indicate that preference as well.



Scan to email Lisa.



take the member challenge

1. **COMMUNITY CONNECTED:** Participants will learn how to _____ for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker.
2. **LOOKING OUT FOR YOU:** America's Electric Cooperatives PAC is _____, advocating for policies and legislation supporting our electric co-op.
3. **SAFETY:** The specifics of a safety program vary based on the cooperative's size, scope of _____, and the potential hazards involved.

Find the answers within the stories, features, and content of this newsletter and you could win a prize. Send your answers to memberchallenge@ecirec.coop. Or, print the word(s) at the top of the back page, cut it out, and send it to: ECI REC, PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember there is a deadline! Entries for this issue must be received by October 1. Sixteen names will be drawn from all correct entries. Members will not be allowed to win more than once per calendar year.

last issue's challenge winners

The following names were drawn from the July/August 2023 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Judy K. Chase | Gary Schmuecker |
| Sandra K. Tempel | Ashley L. Martin |
| Richard F. Greiner | Joseph E. Caw |
| Katherine E. Gibson | Joan C. Beatty |
| Nyle Vargason | Warren M. Henkel |
| Kent D. Anderson | Marvin D. Dostal |
| David R. Beckner | Wayne Scheetz |
| Craig I. Whitesell | Randy Vogeln |

Stay connected! We post operations news and outage updates at facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec.

04 WEBINAR FOR YOUNG LEADERS

AirPods and a scholarship up for grabs!

04 FUN AT THE FAIR

05 CONTRIBUTE TO RECARÉ

06 SMART PAYMENTS

SmartHub saves time and prevents late payments.

06 VOICES OF POWER

Show your support for a reliable energy future.

06 SUPPORT THE PAC

NRECA's PAC supports candidates who understand electric co-ops.

07 ECI REC WEATHERIZATION

Incentives for insulation upgrades.

07 LIHEAP

Heating cost help for qualifying members.

08 REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Our loans support the local economy.

08 OUR CULTURE OF SAFETY

09 HARVEST SAFETY

A cautionary story and power line safety tips.

10 CO-OP CONNECTIONS®

10 OPT IN TO HEAT PLUS

Save up to 50% on heating bills!

10 BUDGET BILLING

11 OPERATIONS UPDATE

05 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

12 MESSAGE FROM CEO TERESA FLOYD

A Trip of a Lifetime

ECI REC Youth Tour representatives return from D.C. and share their experiences with CEO Floyd

a Community Connected feature

OUR 2023 IOWA YOUTH TOUR representatives, Keelie Curtis and Lizzy Kremer, recently met up with CEO Teresa Floyd and Human Resources Director Katie Stadheim, who also served as a chaperone this year.

In the past, our Youth Tour reps would give a presentation at our Annual Meeting of the Members. Now that the meeting has gone virtual, the presentation does not take place. But Keelie and Lizzy still wanted to share their experience.

“I was so thrilled the ladies reached out to see if they could stop by and ask a few questions and share some of the highlights of the 2023 trip!” said CEO Floyd. “During Youth Tour, these students gained a firsthand understanding of the legislative process and made connections with other student leaders from across the country that will last a lifetime. We look forward to continuing the Youth Tour tradition for years to come.”

Keelie and Lizzy were selected and sponsored by ECI REC. They were joined in Washington, D.C., by more than 1,800

Photo credit: LAEC

delegates and chaperones from 44 states. Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were represented by 44 high school students and chaperones. This year, the Youth Tour took place June 17–23. Students had many awesome experiences, including touring the Capitol and various memorials, attending Sunset Parade, listening to keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, competing in Youth Tour Night, and going on a dinner cruise. According to Keelie and Lizzy, it was the highlight of their summer.

ECI REC was proud to send these two young women to our nation's capital! Thank you to them and to Katie Stadheim for being such awesome representatives of ECI REC and Iowa.

About the NRECA Youth Tour

Iowa's electric cooperatives were among the first to send students to Washington, D.C., back in 1958. This year marked the 65th anniversary of the journey. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative. Nationally, over 50,000 students have participated in this program over the decades. For more information, visit www.youthtour.coop.



Photo credit: LAEC



Photo credit: LAEC

Meet Keelie and Lizzy



Keelie Curtis is a junior at Starmont High School and is the daughter of Chris and Tracy Curtis of Aurora. She participates in individual and group speech, yearbook, 4-H, and FFA. Keelie also achieved all-conference honorable mentions in both softball and volleyball. She is a member of the National Honor Society, a DECA officer, and president of her class. Keelie is an avid volunteer and has dedicated her time to religion, robotics, blood drives, school concessions, volleyball events, and several other community activities.



Lizzy Kremer is a sophomore at Independence High School and is the daughter of Joe and Lisa Kremer of Independence. She serves as an officer for the Independence FFA Chapter and leads several committees, including Career and Leadership Development Events. She also acts as the administrator and content manager for the chapter's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Lizzy dedicates time to giving back to her community and participates in the Silver Cord Program. She volunteers through 4-H, FFA, and her church and is the vice president of the Byron Vikings 4-H Club. Lizzy's other activities include cross country and archery.



Photo credit: LAEC

Calling All High School Students Interested in Public Service and Leadership!

Webinar series offers chance to win AirPods and \$1,000 college scholarship

a Community Connected announcement

GUIDED BY OUR COMMITMENT to community, ECI REC has a long history of supporting students through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've also been sending deserving high school students to Washington, D.C., every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

This October, ECI REC is pleased that students can once again participate in the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy—a three-part webinar series that gives rural students the opportunity to learn about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model. The course is open to any high school student in our service area. Students are invited to register at www.IowaYouthTour.com by October 1.

“This annual program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership, or government,” remarked ECI REC CEO Teresa Floyd. “We want to raise students’ awareness of how local electric cooperatives power people’s lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths that are available in smaller communities.”

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars on their own computers or mobile devices. Each Zoom session will last 45–60 minutes and will focus on a specific topic:

- » Tuesday, Oct. 3, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- » Thursday, Oct. 19, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- » Thursday, Oct. 26, 7:00 p.m. – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by October 1 will receive a special box of cooperative goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear about the Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this annual weeklong trip to our nation’s capital. The next Youth Tour is slated for June 15–21, 2024.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact us at 877-850-4343 or ecirec@ecirec.coop. 



Photo credits: Lisa Franck

ECI REC HAD A GREAT time at the Benton and Buchanan County Fairs this summer! We contributed \$1,188 to the county Cattlemen’s Associations, Pork Producers, and Dairy Producers through vouchers for pork and beef burgers and ice cream cones. We also passed out 73 green and yellow map pins and 180 toy hard hats.

Ten lucky people won \$50 bill credits through our prize drawings. Congratulations to these members!

Bill Credit Winners

- » Sharon McAvan, Vinton
- » JoAnn Hepker, Vinton
- » RaMona Hanson, Vinton
- » Paul Grovert, Shellsburg
- » Elizabeth Anderson, Vinton
- » Denise Lehman, Rowley
- » Kristen Ryckman, Winthrop
- » Randy Reck, Winthrop
- » Dean Gissel, Independence
- » Leonard Davis, Independence



October Is National Co-op Month

ECI REC celebrates our membership

a Cooperative Difference feature

AUTUMN IS A BUSY TIME, and October is a particularly eventual month full of school, community, and sports activities. It's also when cooperatives across the United States celebrate National Co-op Month!


When we say ECI REC is celebrating Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you, our membership. After all, we could not exist without our members. While cooperatives operate in many places, industries, and sectors of the economy, there are seven principles that set us apart from other businesses and bring value to you and your communities:

7

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Nationally, cooperatives help build a more participatory, sustainable, and resilient economy. ECI REC is proud to be part of America's cooperative network, serving members with ideals and principles like our own. This network includes more than 831 distribution and 63 generation/transmission cooperatives. Together, we serve 42 million people, powering over 21 million businesses, homes, schools, and farms in 48 states. In fact, 56% of the nation's landmass is powered by cooperatives!

As more consumers seek out alternatives to "big box" businesses, the cooperative model stands out as a unique option rooted in local communities. Because ECI REC is not-for-profit, our mission is solely to serve you, our members. We thank you for being a member of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative! 

RECare Supports Members in Need




a Community Connected article

CONTRIBUTING TO RECare is an easy way to help your fellow members! This program distributes funds to low-income energy consumers in Benton and Buchanan Counties via community action agencies. Donations help pay these members' heating bills or weatherization costs.

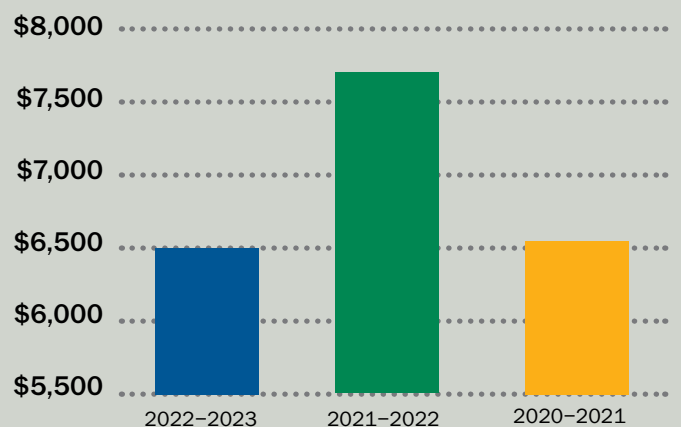


Scan to fill out form online.

ECI REC would like to thank all the members who are giving to others in our communities. Even a small amount can help those less fortunate. From July 2022 to June 2023, 57 members contributed to RECare through monthly contributions. Eight members contributed via one-time donations. In total, these members contributed \$6,479. Those donations assisted 11 members in need, with an average assistance of \$467.46 going to each household.

Help ECI REC reach our goal of exceeding that number of participants in 2023-2024! To sign up for RECare or make a one-time donation, call 877-850-4343 or return the form found at ecirec.coop (under Account Services, Member Programs, RECare Program). 

RECare Three-Year Contribution History



Energy Efficiency Tip of the MONTH

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: Dept. of Energy



SMART PAYMENT

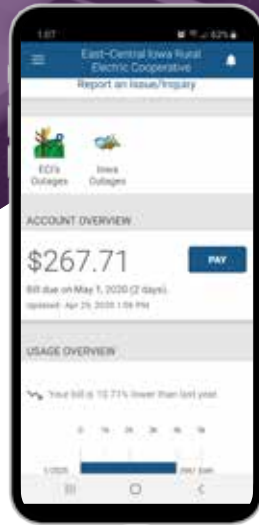
Save time.

Eliminate late fees.

Avoid service interruptions.

Sign up for auto payments, set up your secure preferred payment method, and let account management go into autopilot ... all in the palm of your hand and online.

With SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and you can pay securely online or in the app, anytime, anywhere.



You can make quick payments through SmartHub without creating an online account. Call SmartHub's automated system toll-free number, 888-223-2048, or use the Pay Now application: ecirec.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html.

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.



America's Electric Cooperatives | PAC

AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE IN WASHINGTON

a Looking Out For You update

ALMOST SIXTY YEARS AGO, the NRECA established a political action committee (PAC) to support political candidates who recognize the vital role of electric cooperatives in their local communities.

In March 2023, the NRECA announced that its PAC, previously known as ACRE, is now America's Electric Cooperatives PAC. America's Electric Cooperatives PAC is non-partisan, advocating for policies and legislation supporting our electric co-op.

Your contribution to America's Electric Cooperatives PAC:

- » Allows electric co-ops to financially support federal candidates through personal dollars raised from co-op leaders and member-consumers.
- » Helps make a difference in shaping the future of America's electric co-ops and the communities we serve.
- » Builds on our collective strength, which is grounded in the relationships between local electric co-ops, the communities they serve, and the candidates seeking to represent them.

Join the thousands of co-op leaders who value political engagement and the role it plays in our collective success. For just a small amount a month, you can be sure your voice is heard in Washington, D.C. For more information on how to contribute, simply visit www.cooperative.com/pacdonation or complete and return the form below.

Contributions to the NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits contributions from foreign nationals who lack permanent resident status. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. The NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute. For more information on the PAC, please contact your local cooperative or the NRECA PAC team at 703-907-5799 or by email at pacteam@nreca.coop.

DON'T LET WASHINGTON LEAVE US IN THE DARK.

Protect reliable power for our community - act today!

JOIN NOW AND FIGHT FOR RELIABLE POWER.

Families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a price they can afford. Our national energy policies must support this fundamental promise, but burdensome regulations from Washington, D.C., for new and existing power plants threaten the future of reliable energy.

Visit voicesforcooperativepower.com/keepthelightson to learn more about these new regulations. Let's take a stand for a reliable energy future!

YES, I will support America's Electric Cooperatives PAC.

I will make a one-time contribution of \$_____. My check is enclosed. *Make checks payable to REC Transmittal Account.*

I will contribute monthly. Please add \$_____ each month to my electric bill.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Account No: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photo credit: Touchstone Energy



Members Save With ECI REC Weatherization Incentives

an Energy Wise reminder

Requirements (with or without LIHEAP)

- » Must have electric heat and/or central air (homes with natural gas do not qualify).
- » Home must be built prior to 2000.
- » Must be upgrade to existing home (new additions do not qualify).
- » Project cost must be \$150 or more (labor costs for self-installed projects cannot be included).

Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation - 60% up to \$600
- » Wall Insulation - 60% up to \$600
- » Foundation Insulation - 60% up to \$600
- » Infiltration Control - 60% up to \$200
- » Duct Insulation/Sealing - 60% up to \$200

Maximum rebate per home: \$2,200

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation - 15% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation - 15% up to \$150

Maximum rebate per home: \$300

LIHEAP QUALIFIED

(See LIHEAP weatherization income guidelines to the right)

Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation - 80% up to \$800
- » Wall Insulation - 80% up to \$800
- » Foundation Insulation - 80% up to \$800
- » Infiltration Control - 80% up to \$200
- » Duct Insulation/Sealing - 80% up to \$200

Maximum rebate per home: \$2,800

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation - 20% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation - 20% up to \$150

Maximum rebate per home: \$300

State Releases 2023-2024 LIHEAP Requirements

an Energy Wise update

THE 2023-2024 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply, dial 211 or visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply> to contact your local community action agency.

You may also write to: **LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319.** 

HOW TO APPLY FOR LIHEAP

WHEN TO APPLY

- » Elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled: October 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024
- » All other households: November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024

WHAT TO TAKE

- » Proof of income for all household members age 18 and over; depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or the last calendar year—which ever is easier or more beneficial for you
- » Proof of Social Security Numbers for **all** household members (documentation required)
- » Most recent heat bill
- » Most recent electric bill

WAGE EARNERS

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified. Additional income not listed here may be required.

INCOME MAXIMUMS

| Household Size | Annual Gross Income |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | \$29,160 |
| 2 | \$39,440 |
| 3 | \$49,720 |
| 4 | \$60,000 |
| 5 | \$70,280 |
| 6 | \$80,560 |
| 7 | \$90,840 |
| 8 | \$101,120 |

For households with more than eight members, add \$10,280 for each additional member.



Photo credit: Scott VanOsdel, Straight Talk


Revolving Loan Fund Supports Local Economy

a Community Connected reminder

BUSINESS OWNERS TAKE NOTE—your project may be eligible for a loan through the ECI REC Revolving Loan Fund. Anyone may apply for a loan for any community or economic development project that benefits the rural area, such as new or expanding private businesses, nonprofit groups, and city or county governments. Loan recipients are not required to receive electric service from ECI REC.

“One of ECI REC’s core goals is supporting the growth and development of our members’ hometowns,” said CEO Teresa Floyd. “The recipients of these loans are assets to their communities, and they’re key to helping ensure the long-term viability of the rural economy.”

The Loan Review Committee and the ECI REC Board of Directors consider the financial need of the project; the probability of success; the benefits of the project to the rural area, including the number of jobs to be created or retained; diversification of the economy; quality job creation in terms of pay scale and benefits packages; and community development projects and improvements to the community infrastructure.

Please call 877-850-4343 for more information on loan requirements and terms. 

How Do Electric Cooperatives Create a Culture of Safety?

a Safety feature

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES LIKE ECI REC follow safety programs to ensure the well-being of our employees, our member-consumers, and the communities we serve. The specifics of a safety program vary based on the cooperative’s size, scope of operations, and the potential hazards involved. But there are some common criteria that most electric cooperatives consider when building their safety programs, which we’ve summarized below.

Safety Policies and Procedures:

Establishing clearly defined safety policies and procedures that cover various aspects of operations, including fieldwork, maintenance, equipment handling, and emergency response.

Safety Training and Education:

Offering regular training sessions and educational programs for employees, contractors, and customers on electrical safety, hazard awareness, and safe work practices.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Providing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to employees and enforcing its proper use to minimize the risk of injuries.

Incident Reporting and Investigation:

Having a system for reporting and investigating incidents, near misses, and accidents to identify root causes and implement corrective measures.

Safety Inspections and Audits:

Performing regular safety inspections and audits of work sites, equipment, and facilities to ensure compliance with safety standards and identify potential hazards.

Emergency Response Planning:

Establishing comprehensive emergency response plans, including evacuation procedures and protocols for dealing with electrical accidents, fires, and natural disasters.

Electrical System Maintenance:

Performing regular maintenance of electrical infrastructure—including power lines, transformers, and substations—to identify and address potential safety issues.

Vehicle Safety: Implementing safe driving practices, routine maintenance, and inspections for all vehicles used in cooperative operations.

Environmental Safety: Addressing environmental hazards associated with electrical operations, such as proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials.

Community Outreach and Education:


Engaging with the community to raise awareness of electrical safety and providing safety-related resources to customers.

Safety Committees: Establishing safety committees or teams to oversee and continuously improve the safety program.

Regulatory Compliance: Ensuring compliance with all relevant safety regulations and standards set by government agencies.

Safety Performance Tracking: Monitoring safety performance metrics—such as injury rates and near-miss incidents—to evaluate the effectiveness of the safety program.

Continuous Improvement: Encouraging a culture of continuous improvement, where safety concerns are openly discussed and new safety measures are implemented based on lessons learned.

By adhering to these criteria, electric cooperatives can create a safer working environment for our employees and provide reliable and secure electrical services to our communities. 

A REMINDER TO STAY SAFE THIS HARVEST

Thirteen members went without power after what appeared to be a sprayer boom from a piece of ag equipment burned down ECI REC's distribution line. A member called us to report the outage. When our line crews were up in the bucket trucks putting the line back up, they looked at the ground and noticed two black burn spots. Those marks were left by tires that began sparking on the grass when the power line came in contact with the ag equipment.

After further investigation, we were thankful to learn there were no reported injuries. If something like this happens to you, please call 911 and contact ECI REC immediately. Do not exit the vehicle until help arrives. It is a very serious situation any time a power line is down, especially if an energized line is on the ground. We need to be notified immediately to ensure no one comes in contact with the line. If the equipment is on fire, or it is unsafe to remain inside the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest and jump from the equipment with both feet together. Always keeping your feet together, bunny-hop or penguin-shuffle at least 35-40 feet away from the energized area.



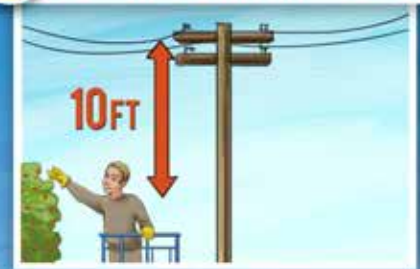
OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY



1 Locate all overhead power lines.



2 Keep self and equipment 10 feet away from all overhead power lines.



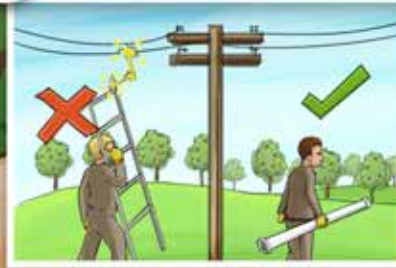
3 Do not touch anything that is in contact with the power line.



4 Beware of fencing near power lines.



5 Carry ladders and other equipment horizontally.



6 Lower equipment apparatus before driving.



7 Never spray near power lines with irrigation systems.



8 Stay at least 35 feet away from fallen power lines.



QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS

ECI REC strives to provide you with the best service at the lowest possible cost. But sometimes you have questions regarding your electrical service or billing, or possibly a complaint. We would like to know. Please contact us! Our office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Local phone: 319-443-4343
Toll free: 877-850-4343
Fax: 319-443-4359

Email: ecirec@ecirec.coop

Mail: 2400 Bing Miller Lane,
PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345

If you have a complaint related to East-Central Iowa REC's service, rather than its rates, and the complaint is not resolved, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board.

Toll free: 877-565-4450

Fax: 515-725-7398

Email: customer@iub.iowa.gov (in subject area, note customer service)

Mail: Customer Service, Iowa Utilities Board, 1375 E. Court Avenue,
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

Choose the Heat Plus Rate for Winter Savings

an Energy Wise update

FROM OCTOBER 1 TO MAY 31, ECI REC offers a special Heat Plus rate that can save qualifying members up to 50% on winter heating bills. If you're making HVAC upgrades or building new, this rate helps earn you a faster return!

The current rate is .05 cents/kWh. To qualify for the Heat Plus rate, your heating system must:

- » Be electric and metered separately.
- » Use the primary electric heating source first, with the backup system operating only when the primary system is unable to satisfy the indoor thermostat setting.
- » Use the primary electric system to heat an area of 400 square feet or more.
- » Use an electric water heater to provide 100% of the domestic water heating for the home (except for the energy supplied from an electric heat pump desuperheater).

Call 877-850-4343 to see if your home, office, business, or shop qualifies for these savings! 📞



DISCOVER THE VALUE OF CO-OP CONNECTIONS®

Photo credit: Cooperatives.com

Save big and enjoy more with your Co-op Connections Card! Online and in-store savings are available from local and national retailers.

- » Emmy Lou Candles
- » Polar Blair's Den
- » Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances
- » E & T NAPA Auto Parts
- » Fabulous Fridays
- » Heartland Acres Agribition Center
- » Cameron Clothing Company
- » Michael & Dowd
- » Styles Unlimited
- » Berry's Lanes, Inc.
- » In the Country Garden & Gifts
- » Frazier Nursery
- » Henkle Creek Mercantile
- » Subway (Vinton)
- » Viking Sewing Center
- » The NEWS/ Buchanan County Review

Download the mobile app to use your card via your smartphone!



Android



Apple

Budget Billing Levels Monthly Payments for Members

Knowing what your monthly expenses are going to be helps you meet your financial obligations. ECI REC's budget billing option helps level your monthly electric bill so you can budget better month to month.

How is your monthly payment calculated?

When you request the budget billing option, we calculate your budget amount with one of two methods:

1. If you have an East-Central Iowa REC usage history*, your payment amount is based on your previous 12-month usage. An accurate budget figure requires regular meter reads.
2. If you have not been at your location of service for 12 months, we will calculate a budget amount based on the previous occupant's usage.

Your account must be paid in full before you are able to enroll or cancel your participation. Accounts are reviewed twice a year to ensure budget amounts match usage.

*Budget billing only applies for members who have an ECI REC usage history of less than 3,000 kWh/month.

YES, tell me my monthly budget amount.

Name: _____

ECI REC Account No.(s):

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mail form to: ECI REC | Billing
PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345-0248

Message From the CEO

continued from page 12

- » Keep a safe distance from power lines and never fly kites or drones near them.
- » Inspect electrical cords for any signs of damage. Never use cords with frayed or exposed wires.
- » Avoid overloading outlets with too many devices, as that can lead to fire hazards.
- » If you're planning any digging projects, remember to call 811 before you dig to avoid hitting underground utility lines.
- » Consider using surge protectors to safeguard your electronics from power surges.
- » Don't use electrical devices near water sources like sinks or bathtubs. Water is a conductor of electricity, and combining the two can lead to electric shocks and life-threatening injuries.
- » Don't place electrical appliances near

- water sources or in areas where they can easily fall or be knocked over, which can lead to accidents and shock hazards.
- » Call a licensed electrician when you need electrical work done. Attempting repairs or installations without proper knowledge and training can be hazardous. Improperly wired circuits or installations can cause fires, shocks, and damage to electrical systems.
- » If you spot any potential electrical hazards in your area, don't hesitate to report them to your local electric cooperative. Your alertness could save lives.

These are just a few reminders. Electric safety goes beyond these tips. Always remember that electricity is a powerful and essential resource that must

be treated with respect and handled safely. If you encounter any electrical hazards, report them to ECI REC or seek professional help from a licensed electrician.

At ECI REC, your safety comes first. We are committed to providing you with safe, reliable, and sustainable electricity. Together, let's make electric safety a top priority in our homes and our communities.

Thank you for your continued trust in us. If you have any questions or concerns about electric safety, feel free to reach out to us at 877-850-4343 or ecirec@ecirec.coop.

MORE ON SAFETY!
Find stories about harvest safety and cooperatives' culture of safety on pages 8 and 9.

YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
(2023/2024 Vice President)

Board District 2 - Julie Kester
(2023/2024 Asst. Secretary/Treasurer)

Board District 3 - Brian McNulty

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna

Board District 6 - Don Shonka

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

Board District 9 - Steve Rau
(2023/2024 President)

Board District 10 - Ryan Kress
(2023/2024 Secretary/Treasurer)

ECI REC Operations Happenings

a Keeping the Lights On tidbit

Pole and Underground Utility Inspections

Badgerland Utility Solutions, LLC, from Wisconsin is



Photo credit: Badgerland Utility Solutions, LLC

inspecting poles and underground utilities. They have completed inspections in the BECCA substation area near Urbana and are working to complete inspections in the Rowley and Walker substation areas.

Welcoming a New Team Member

Brooks Erickson has joined ECI REC! The name may sound familiar, as Brooks worked as summer help last year. He lives in Vinton, graduated from Vinton-Shellsburg High School, and recently received his Powerline Apprentice degree at Northwest Iowa Community College. Brooks started on July 31 and will be working out of the Vinton Operations shop. He says he enjoys learning from such a great group of people. In his spare time, Brooks enjoys hunting, fishing, and being on the river. ECI REC extends a warm welcome to you, Brooks!



Photo credit: Lisa Franck

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: Four yearling goats.
Call or text for more information.
Ph: 319-521-5760.

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop.
Ads for the November/December 2023 Heartland Link must be received by October 1, 2023.

East-Central Iowa REC will publish non-commercial advertisements as a service to our members. All ads are free. They may be submitted by any member or employee of East-Central Iowa REC. Ads should contain a phone number, name (if desired), a brief description of items with price if applicable. Each ad is limited to maximum of 50 words; please type or print clearly. Editor reserves the right to edit or reject any ad. No ads will be taken over the telephone—please email, mail, or bring your ad to the office.

Heartland Link (USPS No. 313-160) is published bimonthly for \$3.30 per year by East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, 2400 Bing Miller Ln., Urbana, IA 52345-0248 with outposts located at 1707 First St. E. Independence, IA 50644 and 1600 West D. St., Vinton, IA 52349. Periodicals class postage paid at Independence, IA, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Heartland Link, 2400 Bing Miller Lane, PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345.

Phone: (319) 443-4343

Ownership: East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Publisher: Teresa Floyd

Editor: Lisa Franck

East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

CLIP AND MAIL

See page 2 for the Member Challenge questions.

Answers: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Please note: NO ANSWERS will be taken over the phone.

Find tools for members at www.ecirec.coop



24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub
See account information at ecirec.smarthub.coop or download the app.



Outage Center & Map
View current outages via SmartHub or at outages.ecirec.coop:81.



Online Forms
Access rebate, service request, and program sign-up forms.



Call Before You Dig
Notify utilities before you dig at www.iowaonecall.com or call 811.



Co-op Connections®
Get discounts on everyday expenses. Visit www.connections.coop or download the mobile app.



Heartland Link E-Newsletter
Email ecirec@ecirec.coop and ask to receive our newsletter via email.



Iowa Rural Power
Join grassroots advocates for Iowa's electric cooperatives. Visit www.iaruralpower.org.



CEO TERESA FLOYD

Message From the CEO: Safety Is a Shared Responsibility

Let's work together to keep our communities safe and powered for the future

AS THE CEO OF ECI REC, I want to take a moment to talk about something that's of paramount importance to us all: electric safety. Safety is the cornerstone of everything we do at ECI REC. We understand that electricity is a powerful force that brings light, warmth, and progress into our lives, but it can also be dangerous if it's not handled responsibly.

Our dedicated team works tirelessly and adheres to the highest safety standards, all to ensure the electricity we provide is safe and reliable. But electric safety is not just our responsibility—it is everyone's business. In our close-knit community, safety is a shared responsibility. Simple oversights can lead to dangerous situations. We must all be vigilant and proactive in ensuring safety around electricity, whether we're at home, at work, or out and about.

Knowledge is power. Here are a few simple safety tips to keep you and your loved ones safe:

- » In case of emergencies, know your electrical panel and the location of the circuit breaker. Knowing how to shut off the power can prevent accidents.