

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

VIPs Visit Urbana Headquarters

Story on page 3



Photo credit: Lisa Franck

**HONORING
85 Years**

12 DAYS OF SAVINGS

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Our energy-saving tips to get you through the holidays!

SUBMIT ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

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ECI REC needs your rebates by January 1, 2024.



OPERATIONS UPDATE

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ECI REC hosts fleet management presentation.



A STORM IS BREWING

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Is our electric reliability in jeopardy?



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS – Sunday, Nov. 5
 CLOSED – Friday, Nov. 10 to honor Veterans Day
 CLOSED – Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23 and 24 for Thanksgiving
 CLOSED – Monday, Dec. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 26 for Christmas
 CLOSED – Monday, Jan. 1 for New Year's Day

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(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

our members say
 thank you

To everyone at ECI REC,

My wife, Sharon, and I would like to thank you for having foresight and diligence while planning and managing the distribution of electricity to your member-consumers without outages during these past hotter-than-normal summer months, especially in our area of Independence. We kept our thermostat at 78 degrees during the daytime and 77 degrees during the night, and we have ceiling fans in our living room, bedrooms, and exercise room, which helps with keeping the temperature cool. We have been ECI REC members for 30 years and have appreciated your service and low rates. Once again, thank you for your excellent service and friendliness whenever we happen to call your office for assistance.

Thomas and Sharon Ciesielski

take the
 member challenge

1. LOOKING OUT FOR YOU: She also covered some of the _____ issues that took place before and during the rebuilding process.

2. ENERGY WISE: The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savings Hub (energy.gov/save) is a _____ to access savings tools to cut energy costs as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

3. LOOKING OUT FOR YOU: It's imperative that policy-makers work to prioritize _____ in every energy policy discussion.

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 December 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 September/October 2023 Heartland Link entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Imogene K. VanHeuvelen | James H. Miller |
| Craig A. Wessels | Connie Travis |
| George Smith | Elaine Winberg |
| Charles A. Kress | William D. Lefebure |
| Dale H. Meister | Kevin Webster |
| Clark A. Russell | Loren M. Meredith |
| Calvin E. Harks | Dan D. Siemens |
| Tracey L. Bantz | Jacklyn E. Tallerico |

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

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COVER STORY

Pictured left to right: IAEC Director of Government Relations Kevin Condon; ECI REC Directors Don Shonka and Gary McKenna; Operations Manager Tom Schmitt; Legislative Correspondent Eli Harberts; CEO Teresa Floyd; HR Director Katie Stadheim; and Manager of Finance Jennifer Schmitz. Photo credit: Lisa Franck

VIPs Visit Urbana Headquarters

a Looking Out for You story


ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, ECI REC had two special guests at our Urbana administrative headquarters: Eli Harberts, a legislative correspondent in D.C. for Senator Grassley’s office; and Kevin Condon, the director of government relations for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (ECI REC’s statewide organization).

Eli works with Joe Gilson, Senator Grassley’s agriculture and energy advisor; he also works on environmental issues. Eli is a Grundy Center native, and during the August recess he planned to be in Iowa to visit with constituents

and groups that have issues within his portfolio of topics. He reached out to the IAEC to see if he could meet with a couple of electric cooperatives.

CEO Teresa Floyd gave Eli and Kevin a brief overview of the Cooperative. They visited CIPCO’s Urbana Solar Acres, a utility-scale solar generation site located in the Urbana BECCA Industrial Park (just south of the Cooperative’s Urbana location). The group then headed to the Vinton Operations Center, where CEO Floyd spoke about some of the damage the facility sustained

during the March 4, 2022, EF-1 tornado. She also covered some of the supply chain issues that took place before and during the rebuilding process.

“It is an important initiative of ECI REC to connect with its legislators. In doing so, we hope to become a trusted resource they can call upon if a need should arise. We were very appreciative for the opportunity to share ECI REC’s story with Eli,” reflected CEO Floyd. “I encouraged Eli to reach out any time with questions. He can count on us for credible information.” 

BE SAFE ON THE HUNT

- Always implement firearm safety techniques.
- Do not lean a tree stand against a utility pole.
- Never fire toward power lines or equipment.

Safe Electricity.org

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG
IT'S THE LAW!

Iowa One Call:
811 or 800-292-8989

YOU CAN ALSO FILE A LOCATE REQUEST ONLINE!
www.iowaonecall.com

Happy Holidays

From the ECI REC family to yours,
have a blessed holiday season!

Give Some Extra Sparkle This Holiday Season With Help From Your Cooperative!

Support these local businesses by shopping with your Co-op Connections® Card.



Emmy Lou Candles | Polar Blair's Den | Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances | 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*

Give the gift of electricity!

Giving the gift of electricity may not be at the top of your list of ideas this holiday season, but it may be the perfect fit. Having a winter heating bill covered or partially covered could be a great, unexpected surprise for a friend or family member, and it's easy to do with the Power Boost Gift Certificate from ECI REC. Simply fill out the form online at ecirec.coop/power-boost-gift-certificate. Both check and credit card payments are accepted. You may also access the form by scanning the QR code.



12 DAYS of ENERGY SAVINGS

an Energy Wise feature

Did you know the holiday season was traditionally celebrated over 12 days?

(Hence, why we sing "The 12 Days of Christmas.")

And this season you can enjoy lower energy bills with these 12 cost-saving tips:

1

Inspect windows and doors for leaks and seal them with caulk or weatherstripping.

2

Light up your home for less by switching to energy-efficient LED holiday lights.

3

Optimize savings and convenience by using timers to turn holiday lights on and off.

4

Make handmade decorations that don't use energy, such as a wreath for your door.

5

Have your chimney and fireplace cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional.

6

Give energy-saving gifts! LED bulbs and smart plugs make great stocking stuffers.

7

Bake multiple batches of holiday cookies and pies at one time to maximize energy use.

8

Turn down the thermostat when holiday guests arrive. Those extra bodies mean free heat.

9

After your holiday meal, scrape dishes instead of rinsing them and run only full loads.

10

Turn off your stereo or TV after listening to holiday music or rewatching holiday classics.

11

Taking a holiday trip? Turn off lights and equipment and set the thermostat to vacation mode.

12

Start the new year by making a resolution to use energy more efficiently every day.

With these tips, you can use less energy and be more comfortable this holiday season ... and all year long!

Submit Your 2023 Energy Efficiency Rebates No Later Than JANUARY 1, 2024

an Energy Wise reminder

Your 2023 energy efficiency rebates need to be submitted to ECI REC by the first of the new year—and don't forget to also visit energy.gov/save and contact your tax advisor to see if any of your new equipment qualifies for federal tax credits!

The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savings Hub (energy.gov/save) is a one-stop shop to access savings tools to cut energy costs as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The new website provides information on tax credits and forthcoming rebates to help people take control of their energy costs and have cleaner, more efficient options as a consumer—whether they are looking to purchase an electric vehicle, update an appliance, or make their home safer and more comfortable.

Purchases must meet specific energy efficiency requirements. The Energy Savings Hub also highlights a variety of low- or no-cost DIY energy efficiency tips that can reduce energy usage and waste. Investing in energy-efficient equipment saves energy and money while also making a positive impact on the environment!

Here are some basics on the available tax credits:

IRS FORM 5695 (2023–2032)

- » **Air conditioners, heating equipment, hot water boilers, and water heaters:** 30% of the cost paid by the consumer, up to \$600. Subject to a cumulative annual cap of \$1,200.
- » **Air-source heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and biomass stoves/boilers:** 30% of the cost paid by the consumer. Consumers have a \$2,000/year limit in total for heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and biomass stoves/boilers.
- » **Geothermal (ground-source) heat pumps:** 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.
- » **Solar water heaters:** 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.
- » **Home energy audit:** 30% of the cost paid by the consumer up to \$150.

IRS FORM 8936 (2023–2032)

- » **Electric or fuel cell vehicle (new):** Up to \$7,500 for income-eligible buyers of qualified vehicles.
- » **Electric or fuel cell vehicle (used):** Up to \$4,000 for income-eligible buyers of qualified vehicles.



Photo credit: Scharfsm86, Dreamstime.com

Guidance on how rebates will be implemented isn't expected until late 2023. Anticipated rebates include:

- » Electric load service center service/breaker box upgrades
- » Electric stove, cooktop, range, and/or oven
- » Electric wiring
- » Heat pump clothes dryer
- » Heat pump heating/cooling system
- » Heat pump water heater
- » Weatherization (insulation, air sealing, ventilation)

Rebates will have income eligibility requirements. 🌱

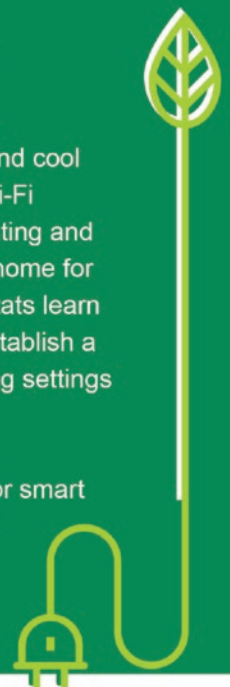
Source: energy.gov

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away.

For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR® label.

Source: Dept. of Energy





YEAR-END OPERATIONS UPDATE

a Keeping the Lights On article


Photo credit: Pat Hyland

EAST-CENTRAL IOWA REC'S CREWS continue to build new services as requests for them come in. At this point in 2023, we have energized over 80 new services scattered throughout our service area. Earlier this year, crews out of our Vinton Operations Center finished up energizing services for the second addition in Anderson Creek on the south side of Vinton. In Independence, crews continue to see steady growth on the south side of town.

Thirty-four miles of overhead line replacement that was scheduled in the 2023 Work Plan was completed in September. Contractor availability and the dry conditions throughout this year have made underground cable installation difficult. However, as of this printing, we expect all the underground 2023 Work Plan projects to be completed.

Our ongoing monthly safety meetings continue to shine the light on working safely. One aspect of safety we are focusing on is fleet management. ECI REC invited the Iowa State Patrol to our September safety meeting, which was held at the Independence Operations Center. Commercial Vehicle Patrol Officer Benjamin Driscoll (pictured above) gave a presentation on proper cargo securement, vehicle weight limits, and distracted driving. He also inspected some of ECI REC's fleet and gave pointers on how to remain in compliance with commercial vehicle regulations.

The Operations team has been busy developing the department's budget for 2024. Material and trucks continue to have significant lead times, making planning very challenging—but we do the best we can. **If you are considering any changes or upgrades to your electrical services, contact us soon so we can be prepared to meet your needs in 2024.**

As always, be aware of your surroundings and stay safe on the roads and in the fields! 

Board Returns \$453,324 to Members Through Patronage Dividends

a Cooperative Difference announcement


EACH MONTH, ECI REC's Board of Directors reviews the many variables that impact your Cooperative's financial health, including debt obligations, the cost of purchase power, margins, and our cash position. At this year's May meeting, your Board concluded that it was in ECI REC's best interest to postpone retiring patronage dividends until 2024. (CEO Teresa Floyd shared this news in the July/August *Heartland Link*.)

The past five months have unfolded very positively. Along with the March rate increase and rate structure changes, CIPCO's cost of power has so far been lower than anticipated. ECI REC's overall financials remain solid, and our margins are improving. As a result, at the September meeting, your Board of Directors approved the retirement of \$453,324—100% of our 2008 margins—to members of the Cooperative.

In October, 6,031 member-accounts that received electricity from East-Central Iowa REC in 2008 received money back. These dollars represent your share of the deferred patronage dividends (profits) the Cooperative earned in that year. In the past 10 years, ECI REC has returned \$5,261,706 to its membership.

Over sixty-two percent (62.19%) of the 6,031 member-accounts that received money back are active and currently receiving electricity from ECI REC. These active member-accounts saw a credit on their October bills. The remaining 2,280 member-accounts that are no longer active (not currently receiving electricity from ECI REC) received their credits in the form of a check that was placed in the mail on October 13. If you did not receive a credit on your October bill, you did not receive electric service from ECI REC in 2008. Email the Urbana office at csr@ecirec.coop or call 877-850-4343 if you have any questions.

Since ECI REC is a nonprofit organization, members pay for their electricity at cost, and any margins left over at the end of the year after all expenses are covered are allocated in the form of patronage dividends. These margins include operating margins, which are generated directly by the sale of electricity to you. They also include non-operating margins, which consist of interest from our investment of spare cash and patronage dividend allocations. ECI REC receives these allocations through memberships with other cooperatives from which we purchase goods and services.

As owners of the Cooperative, members provide equity by allowing ECI REC to hold on to these margins for a certain length of time. They are used to finance operations and system improvements, to cover the cost of maintaining the electric distribution system, and more. 



Youth Tour Gives High Schoolers Inside Access to Washington, D.C.

a Community Connected reminder

THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR is ready for you in 2024! Like last year, both high school juniors *and* sophomores are able to apply.

ECI REC is looking for two eligible students to sponsor on this once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C. The event will take place this summer. To apply, students must be heading into their sophomore or junior year of high school and have parents or legal guardians who are members of ECI REC. Applications can be found on our Youth Tour page at ecirec.coop, and they are due **Wednesday, February 28, 2024**.

Youth Tour is one of the most important programs ECI REC takes part in. Our teens are our future, and our future is looking brighter every day. For more information about the Youth Tour program, email us at iowayouthtour@ecirec.coop or call us toll free at 877-850-4343. Also, follow the Iowa Youth Tour on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram! 📱

THINGS YOU'LL SEE AND DO ON YOUTH TOUR

Washington Monument | World War II Memorial | Albert Einstein Memorial | Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial | Vietnam Veterans Memorial | National Mall | Potomac River Boat Cruise | Holocaust Memorial | Madame Tussauds Wax Museum | Ford's Theatre | Korean War Veterans Memorial | Lincoln Memorial | Washington National Cathedral | Mount Vernon | Iwo Jima Sunset Parade | White House | U.S. Capitol | Newseum



Quick Ways to Pay Your Electric Bill

Did you know you can make quick automated payments through SmartHub ... without creating an online account?

Here's how:

- » Call SmartHub's automated system toll-free number: 888-223-2048.
- » Use the Pay Now application. Go to ecirec.coop. In the Account Login section of the home page, click the Pay Now button. Then enter your account number and last name or business name to access your account and pay your bill.

YOU CAN PAY
ONLINE
OR BY
PHONE

Take SmartHub Mobile!

Download the SmartHub app in the Apple or Android store so you can access your account 24/7.

You can register for the first time using the app too! Scan the QR codes below, or use the Download the App button in the Account Login section of our home page.



Android Users



Apple Users

Three Scholarships for High School Seniors

a Community Connected reminder

ECI REC Scholarship Program – Up to ten \$1,000 scholarships are available to students who will continue their education in college in any field. Up to two \$1,000 scholarships are also available to students accepted to the Powerline Technology program at Northwest Iowa Community College. The deadline for applications is **Wednesday, March 6, 2024**. Visit ecirec.coop for more details. Look for the Scholarships page in the Community & News menu.

Youth Tour Alumni Scholarship – One \$10,000 and four \$1,000 scholarships are available to Electric Cooperative Youth Tour alumni. Visit electric.coop for details.

Engineers of the Future Scholarship – \$2,000 scholarships are available to students pursuing a career in engineering. Visit electric.coop for details. 📱

A Storm is Brewing: Electric Reliability in Jeopardy

a Looking Out for You feature, originally published in the Washington Times on October 5, 2023

By Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, and Congressman Randy Feenstra, representing Iowa's 4th District

SUPPLY CHAIN DELAYS. Disorderly retirements of dispatchable electric generation. Complex regulations on power plant emissions. Regional warnings about a lack of generation capacity to cover electric demand. Permitting delays for needed electric transmission infrastructure.

Individually, any one of these issues is enough to seriously impact reliability of electric service. But all these scenarios are playing out simultaneously across the nation and a perfect storm may be on the horizon.

Electric reliability across America is in serious jeopardy, and frankly, it's unacceptable. Here are the facts:

- » Dispatchable sources of electric generation like coal and nuclear are being retired far too early. And their generation capacity is being replaced by intermittent sources of generation like wind and solar. The downside: These intermittent sources only work when the wind blows and the sun shines.
- » Battery storage is not yet feasible for longer durations on a utility-scale level. For all practical purposes, electricity must be generated as it is being consumed. This becomes a problem when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining and energy consumption is high.
- » Demand for electricity continues to grow as our society becomes increasingly reliant on electricity.
- » Locally owned electric cooperatives work hard to provide reliable and affordable electricity for the member-consumers they serve. Co-ops are mission driven to power lives and empower communities and they make long-term decisions to ensure power is available when it's needed.


That's why we believe in a power generation strategy that prioritizes energy diversity. The same adage used for sound financial investing also applies to power generation: don't put all your eggs in one basket. Iowa's electric cooperatives use dispatchable sources of power like coal and natural gas because they can control the output and ramp up generation when needed to match sudden increases in electric demand. But our ability to provide reliable electricity is in jeopardy.

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency released its proposed rule to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new

and existing fossil-fuel-fired electric generating units. The proposal is part of the current administration's misguided regulatory agenda to create a carbon-free power sector by 2035 and net zero emissions economy-wide by no later than 2050. We believe this proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation.

But that's not the only threat we face. The 2023 NERC summer reliability assessment is just the latest in a series of alarming reminders about the new electric reliability challenges facing the nation. Nine states experienced power interruptions last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply.

It's imperative that policymakers work to prioritize reliability in every energy policy discussion. Federal policies must recognize the compromised reliability reality facing the nation before it's too late.


The families, farms and businesses served by electric cooperatives deserve affordable AND reliable electricity to power their lives. 

About to Sign Up for Renewable Equipment? Call Us First!

an Energy Wise reminder

IF YOU RECEIVE an offer on equipment like solar panels or small wind electric systems that sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Don't be swayed by aggressive sales tactics or a nontransparent sales rep. Be especially wary if you hear phrases like:

- » You don't need to work with your cooperative.
- » You won't have an electric bill.
- » Your cooperative is against renewables.
- » Your utility will pay you!

Before you sign an equipment contract for renewables, call ECI REC at 877-850-4343. Our team is always here to provide the information you need and answer your questions. 



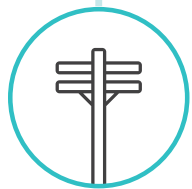
4 KEY FACTORS That Impact Energy Bills

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



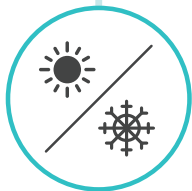
Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuels used to generate electricity fluctuates, which is why you see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



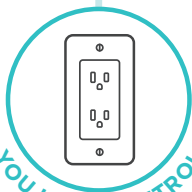
Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance, and additional costs necessary to provide electric service.



Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics, and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.

YOU HAVE CONTROL

Cooperative Offers Two Helpful Notification Programs *a Keeping the Lights On message*

THE NOTIFY LANDLORD BEFORE DISCONNECT PROGRAM



NOTIFY LANDLORD BEFORE DISCONNECT

is available if you own rental property that resides in ECI REC's service area and receives electricity from the Cooperative. Once enrolled, you will be notified prior to a meter disconnect while you are renting out the property, which can be helpful if your tenant contacts ECI REC to disconnect the meter when they are moving out. Or, a renter may have late bill payments that could result in meter disconnection. In certain situations and weather conditions, the owner may want to avoid the disconnect. 🌱

THE HELPING HAND REMINDER PROGRAM



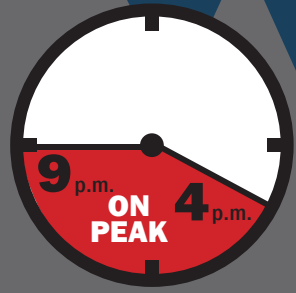
HELPING HAND REMINDER

is a good option for members who struggle to pay electric bills in a timely fashion, perhaps due to illness or forgetfulness. When the account of an enrolled member becomes delinquent, ECI REC notifies their designated contact person. The contact person then reminds the member who missed their payment—they are under no obligation to pay the delinquent bill. Members can withdraw from the program at any time by contacting an ECI REC member service representative at 877-850-4343. 🌱

Enrollment for both programs can be completed by filling out the forms online at ecirec.coop under Account Services, Member Programs. Or, access either form online by scanning its QR code above.

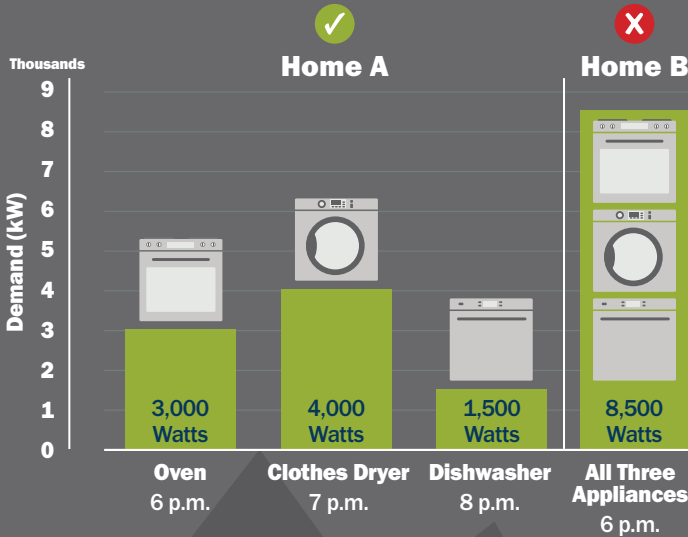
IN 2024, MAKE A RESOLUTION TO

TAKE A LOAD OFF THE PEAK



Frigid winter temperatures increase electricity usage for everyone. However, there are ways you can help ECI REC (and your fellow members) save money!

- Keep electricity usage to a minimum between 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.** ECI REC pays the most for electricity used in these peak hours. If you cut back during this window, everyone saves.
- Coordinate the number of appliances you operate at once.** Staggering the use of appliances reduces the demand on our system, which means lower costs.



Results

Home A staggered the use of their appliances during peak hours, creating less of a demand on the Cooperative's system.

Home B used all three appliances at once during peak hours, creating higher demand, which could increase costs.

Statement of Ownership

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11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative	PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345-0248

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
National Rural Electric Co-op Finance Corp (CFC)	201701 Cooperative Way, Dulles, VA 20166

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 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
ECI REC Member-Consumer Information			
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		7368	7340
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	7325	7303
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	0	0
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		7325	7303
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	0	0
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		7325	7303
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		43	37
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		7368	7340
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		100%	100%

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	86	83
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	7411	7386
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	7411	7386
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	100%	100%

I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the **Nov/Dec 2023 (11/01/23)** issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Lisa Franck, Manager of Communications/Editor Date **09/26/23**

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

Privacy Policy for East-Central Iowa REC

Our Commitment to Privacy: At East-Central Iowa REC, confidentiality is very important to us. As we continue to improve and expand our services and delivery channels, we recognize our customers' need and desire to preserve their privacy and confidentiality. East-Central Iowa REC recognizes the trust you have placed in us and is committed to safeguarding the privacy of our customers' information. The following policy affirms our continued commitment to preserving customer confidentiality.

The Information We Collect: We receive and retain information about our customers through many sources:

- » Information we receive from you on applications or other forms;
- » Information about your transactions with us, our affiliates, or others; and
- » Information we receive from a consumer-reporting agency.

The Way We Use Information: We limit the use and collection of nonpublic personal information to that which is necessary to maintain and administer financial services. We do not share this information with outside parties unless:

- » The information is provided to help complete a customer-initiated transaction (such as credit reporting agencies, document processing companies, etc.);
- » The customer has requested it;
- » The disclosure is required by law (e.g., subpoena, investigation of fraudulent activity, etc.); or
- » The disclosure is required by banking regulation (e.g., Fair Lending Reporting Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act).

When customer information is provided to any of the third parties just mentioned, that third party must agree to adhere to privacy principles that provide for keeping such information confidential.

Limiting Employee Access to Information: East-Central Iowa REC limits employee access to customer information to those with a business reason for knowing such information. All of our employees are educated on the importance of confidentiality and customer privacy. Any employee who violates the financial privacy of our customers will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures and possible termination.

Protection of Information via Established Security Procedures: To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the correct use of information, we have put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information.

Maintaining Accurate Information: We have established procedures so that our customers' financial information is accurate, current, and complete in accordance with reasonable commercial standards. East-Central Iowa REC will respond to requests to correct inaccurate information in a timely manner.

At East-Central Iowa REC, we value our customer relationships. We want you to understand how we use the information you provide and our commitment to ensuring your personal privacy. If you have any questions about how East-Central Iowa REC protects your information, please contact us at 877-850-4343 or email ecirec@ecirec.coop.

Message From the CEO continued from page 12

our core principles is concern for community. While our priority is always to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good:

- » The RECare program distributes funds to low-income energy consumers in Benton and Buchanan Counties via community action agencies.
- » We work closely with our local schools to provide safety demonstrations, participate in career fairs, and award college scholarships.
- » We participate in the annual Youth Tour by sending our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long experience of democracy in action. The trip is inspirational for many students, and we are both humbled and honored to be part of this leadership development journey.


Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you. You empower ECI REC through your membership, as well as your participation in and support of these programs.

Because we are locally governed by members of our community, we get a firsthand perspective on community priorities, which enables us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as equipment and technology upgrades and industry-related programs.

We are thankful that our Board of Directors carves out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings, and keep abreast of industry trends. This time investment results in better-informed advisors who serve ECI REC's interests in a way our members expect and deserve. As always, please alert us to any problems or provide suggestions by emailing us, calling, or attending Cooperative events. When you give your input, you help us improve our operations and better serve you, our member.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our lineworkers and other employees receive when they are working in severe weather

and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are restoring power in challenging situations. Your loyalty, dedication, and partnership have been the cornerstone of our success, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

East-Central Iowa REC was established to bring electricity to our area when no one else would. The Cooperative is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and we're thankful for your membership! 

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)

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: John Deere mower tractor with garden tiller. Ph: 563-425-4262.

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the January/February 2024 *Heartland Link* must be received by December 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.

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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



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CEO TERESA FLOYD

Message From the CEO: We're Thankful for Your Membership

Expressing gratitude to our valued members

I HOPE THIS MESSAGE finds you well! I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of our valued members for your unwavering support and commitment to your Cooperative.

I generally use this space to provide strategic planning updates and tell you about the progress of our various ongoing initiatives. We share these updates so our members have a window into ECI REC's priorities, progress, and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you all know just what an impact you have on the Cooperative and the greater community—likely in ways you do not realize.

As the CEO of ECI REC, I have had the privilege of witnessing the incredible impact our Cooperative has had on our community and beyond. Our members' trust and dedication have allowed us to consistently provide reliable and affordable electricity to homes, businesses, and institutions—even in the face of challenges and uncertainties.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of