

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## It's Time to Apply Check out ECI REC's youth programs!

Stories on page 3



Photo credits: Iowa Youth Tour, courtesy photo, Adobe Firefly



College scholarships



Washington, D.C. Youth Tour

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Now seeking candidates for Districts 6, 8, and 10.

### POWERFUL CONNECTIONS page 6

Recapping the statewide association annual meeting.



### WINTER OPERATIONS UPDATE page 8

From safety to infrastructure updates.



### OUTAGE RESTORATION page 9

Steps we take to restore your power.





# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## Contact ECI REC

### EMAILS

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(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop  
(billing, new customers)

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### HOURS

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

(closed Saturdays,  
Sundays, and holidays)

## connect with us

We've been sharing  
news and tips on  
Facebook for 12 years.  
Make sure to like us!



## 2024 pocket calendars

Members, stop by the Urbana office to  
pick up your free pocket calendar from  
ECI REC!



## take the member challenge

1. COMMUNITY CONNECTED: It's a program East-Central Iowa REC takes pride in participating in—after all, our \_\_\_\_\_ are our future!
2. ENERGY WISE: Your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ details will also be front and center for fast, easy access!
3. COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE: It is important to have a pool of strong \_\_\_\_\_, which is why we encourage members to run in our Board elections.

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 February 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 November/December 2023 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Bridget M. Seiler

Susan Harder

Carrie M. Powers

Marvin D. Dostal

Terry Hertle

Everett Heitshusen

Jack E. Davis

John Chrystal

Julita C. Goedken

Billie Jo Tonn

Richard A. Griswold

Makenna G. Barth

Bobby W. Berry

Walter A. Hickey

Brenda K. Kleitsch

William F. Venneman III

Stay connected! We post operations news and outage  
updates at [facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec](https://facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec).

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Apply now for Youth Tour and scholarships.

### 03 YEARS OF SERVICE

ECI REC honors four employees.

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Now seeking candidates for Districts 6, 8, and 10.

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Save the date: June 26, 2024.

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# We Want You! ECI REC Will Send Two High Schoolers on Youth Tour

*a Community Connected feature*

**EVERY YEAR**, over a thousand high school students from across the country travel to Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This year, ECI REC is looking for two students to sponsor on the trip, which will take place June 15–21.

To be eligible, students must be in their sophomore or junior year and have parents or legal guardians who are members of ECI REC. Applications can be found on the Youth Tour page at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop), under the Community & News menu. **They are due Wednesday, February 28, 2024.**

Youth Tour attendees participate in leadership training, engage in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, learn about electric cooperatives, and tour sites like the Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, and Lincoln Memorial. Iowa's electric cooperatives have been sending students on the

Youth Tour for over 60 years. It's a program East-Central Iowa REC takes pride in participating in—after all, our teens are our future!

For more information about Youth Tour, email us at [iowayouthtour@ecirec.coop](mailto:iowayouthtour@ecirec.coop) or call toll free: 877-850-4343. Also, follow the Iowa Youth Tour on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram!

## Did you know Youth Tour alumni are eligible for scholarships?

That's right! The Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation offers one \$10,000 scholarship and four \$1,000 scholarships to Youth Tour alumni. Applications typically become available early in the new year and are due in May. Visit [electric.coop/our-organization/youth-programs/scholarships](http://electric.coop/our-organization/youth-programs/scholarships) for more information. 📄



**DUE DATE:**  
**Wednesday,**  
**February 28, 2024**

**GET THE APPLICATION:**  
**Go to [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) and**  
**choose Youth Tour from**  
**under the Community**  
**& News menu.**

*On the cover: 2023 Youth Tour group photo at Einstein Memorial (top); Missy Rau presenting scholarship to 2023 winner Brock Steinlage (bottom left); Keellie Curtis and Lizzy Kremer were sponsored by East-Central Iowa REC in 2023 on the annual NRECA Youth Tour (bottom right).*

## Investing in Our Youth Through College Scholarships

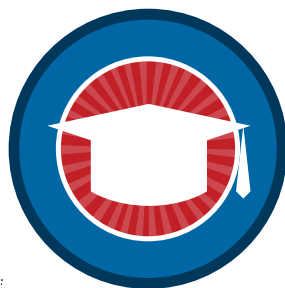
*a Community Connected article*

**THROUGH OUR COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT FUND**, East-Central Iowa REC gives unclaimed patronage dividends back to the communities we serve. Our youth programs—college scholarships and the Youth Tour—are just two initiatives supported by this fund.

Every year, East-Central Iowa REC is proud to offer up to ten \$1,000 scholarships 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.

### Attention future electrical engineers

The Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation offers \$2,000 scholarships to college students pursuing careers in electrical engineering, specifically those who plan to return to rural areas to work. Applications typically become available early in the new year and are due in May. Visit [electric.coop/engineers-future-scholarship](http://electric.coop/engineers-future-scholarship) for more information. 📄



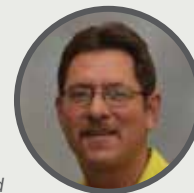
**DUE DATE:**  
**Wednesday,**  
**March 6, 2024**

**GET THE APPLICATION:** Go  
**to [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) and**  
**choose Scholarships**  
**from under the**  
**Community & News**  
**menu.**

## THANK YOU! Years of Service Honorees



**25 YEARS**  
**Mike Adams**  
**Inventory/Maintenance**  
**Technician**

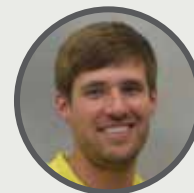


**25 years**  
**Doug Appelgate**  
**SCADA Technician**

*Mike and Doug were honored for their service at the IAEC annual meeting. See page 7 for more details.*



**10 years**  
**Scott McLaughlin**  
**Engineering Technician**



**10 years**  
**Dane Peterson**  
**Engineering Design**  
**Technician**

# Committee Now Taking Nominations for 2024 Board Elections


*a Cooperative Difference announcement*

**AT A RECENT BOARD MEETING**, each ECI REC director selected a member-consumer from their individual district to serve on ECI REC's Nominating Committee. The committee's purpose is to nominate one to two ECI REC REC members as candidates for the director positions that are up for election this year. The vote will take place at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Members.

There are three positions up for election. You can find information on these individual Board districts below.

If you are interested in being a candidate for one of the positions, would like to make a

recommendation, or have a petition nominating a member, please contact the Nominating Committee member representing the Board district you or the nominee could represent. Nominations may also be submitted to the Urbana office.

Nominations by petition must have 35 names. Candidates must live in the Board district they could potentially represent. All nominations must be registered at the Urbana Administrative Headquarters before 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2024. On that date, all candidates will be reviewed and nominations confirmed at a meeting of the Nominating Committee. 

**ENERGIZING TOMORROW:**  
A Resilient Journey of Innovation and Dedication

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**ECI REC's Annual Meeting of the Members**

**Wednesday, June 26, 2024**

**Registration begins at 10:30 a.m.**

**Business meeting begins at 11:00 a.m.**

**Platform and/or location to be determined**

## Director Positions Up For Election and the Representing Nominating Committee Members

### BOARD DISTRICT 8

**Currently represented by Nick Donlea, La Porte City**

**Serving:** Barclay, Big Creek, Fox, Lester, Poyner, and Spring Creek Townships in Black Hawk County; Fairbank, Jefferson, Perry, and Westburg Townships in Buchanan County

**Nominating Contact:**  
Randy Merkel  
1339 190th Street  
Independence, IA 50644  
Phone: 319-240-7221

### BOARD DISTRICT 6

**Currently represented by Don Shonka, Independence**

**Serving:** Homer, Sumner, and Washington Townships in Buchanan County

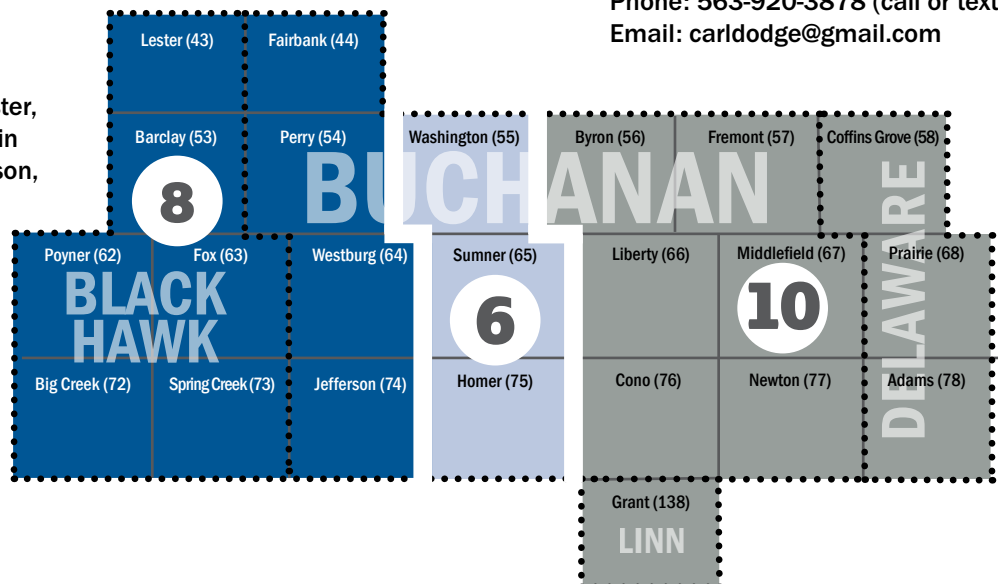
**Nominating Contact:**  
Ernie Henderson  
2007 Three Elms Park Road  
Independence, IA 50644  
Phone: 319-929-2575 (call or text)  
Email: ernielhenderson@gmail.com

### BOARD DISTRICT 10

**Currently represented by Ryan Kress, Winthrop**

**Serving:** Byron, Cono, Fremont, Liberty, Middlefield, and Newton Townships in Buchanan County; Adams and Prairie Townships in Delaware County; Grant Township in Linn County

**Nominating Contact:**  
Carl Dodge  
2418 Buchanan Delaware Avenue  
Masonville, IA 50654  
Phone: 563-920-3878 (call or text)  
Email: carldodge@gmail.com





# New 2024 Energy Efficiency Incentives Are Available for You!

*an Energy Wise special feature*



Photo credit: ECI REC

**IS IT TIME** to replace your water heater, upgrade old appliances, or change out your heating or cooling system? Maybe you're planning to tackle some remodeling or build a new home. Don't forget about ECI REC's energy efficiency rebate programs when it comes to these types of home projects! As a Cooperative member-consumer, these incentives are right at your fingertips! 🌱

## WEATHERIZATION INCENTIVES

### LIHEAP and Non-LIHEAP Requirements

- » Rebates based on heating source.
- » 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).

### Non-LIHEAP Members 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 Incentive per Account: \$2,200

### Central AC Only

*Non-electric heating.*

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation: 15% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation: 15% up to \$150
- » Maximum Incentive per Account: \$300

### LIHEAP-Qualified Members 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 Incentive per Account: \$2,800

### Central AC Only

*Non-electric heating.*

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation: 20% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation: 20% up to \$150
- » Maximum Incentive per Account: \$300

## NEW EQUIPMENT/APPLIANCE INCENTIVES

### Air-Source Heat Pump, Including Mini-Splits

- » Cold Climate Heat Pump: \$350/ton
- » Standard Air-Source Heat Pump: \$250/ton
- » Hybrid Air-Source Heat Pump Bonus: \$50/ton

### Ground-Source Heat Pump

- » Closed-Loop System: \$500/ton
- » Open-Loop System: \$300/ton (no "pump & dump" systems)
- » Hybrid System with Gas Backup: Additional \$50/ton
- » Unit Replacement: \$150/ton

### ENERGY STAR® Central Air Conditioning

- » ENERGY STAR-Qualified: \$100/unit (min. SEER 15.0 & EER 12.5 or SEER2 15.2 & EER2 12.0)
- » Limit two A/C rebates per account.

### Indoor Air Quality

*Equipment must serve the entire conditioned space of the home.*

- » Energy/Heat Recovery Ventilator (ERV/HRV): \$250/unit
- » Limit two HRVs per account.

### Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH)

- » ENERGY STAR Integrated Unit: \$500/unit

### High-Efficiency Electric Water Heater

- » Electric Resistance Unit: \$75/unit (40 gal. tank min., EF >= 0.90)
- » Geothermal Assisted Storage Unit: \$150/unit (40 gal. tank min., EF >= 0.90)

### Beneficial Electrification (BE) Incentive

*Available when a resistance or HPWH unit is replacing a natural gas or LP unit, or for new accounts.*

- » Go-Electric Bonus: \$100

### ENERGY STAR-Qualified Appliances

- » ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer: \$40/unit (must have electric water heater)
- » ENERGY STAR Electric Clothes Dryer: \$20/unit
- » ENERGY STAR Heat Pump Clothes Dryer: \$100/unit

### Electric Vehicle Chargers

*The primary charging location of the vehicle must be at the home address of the member served by ECI REC. Account must be on time-of-use rate to be eligible.*

- » Level II Charger (240/208-volt input supply) installation: 50% up to \$500

## NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

All-Star Home: \$1,000 per home

*Requirements:*

- » Energy-Efficient Home Construction: High-performance insulation and windows.
- » High-Efficiency Heating and Cooling: Requires geothermal, cold climate air-source heat pump, or ENERGY STAR air-source heat pump.
- » Efficient Electric Water Heating: Requires the installation of a heat pump water heater or geothermal assisted electric water heater.
- » Electric ENERGY STAR appliances for clothes washer, clothes dryer, dishwasher, and refrigerator.

**Our rebate forms are online at: [ecirec.coop/rebate-forms-and-specifications](https://ecirec.coop/rebate-forms-and-specifications).**



Photo credits: IAEC

# Powerful Connections

## Statewide association annual meeting celebrates 2023 achievements and prepares for new leadership

*a Cooperative Difference feature*

### THE IOWA ASSOCIATION OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES (IAEC)—the

trade association for Iowa’s electric cooperatives—held its 2023 annual meeting at the Sheraton West Des Moines Conference Center on December 7 and 8. There were more than 350 registered attendees. Directors and employees from Iowa’s locally owned electric cooperatives received informative updates from the statewide Board and staff, in addition to learning about industry trends and best practices from invited speakers.

“Our theme of ‘Powerful Connections’ explains one of the valuable services that a statewide association provides for its members,” remarked Roger Solomonson of Heartland Power Cooperative, who has completed his second and final year as IAEC Board President. “For example, the IAEC forms connections through lobbying efforts, our statewide magazine, social media, youth leadership programs, and training events for employees and directors of Iowa’s electric cooperatives.”


IAEC Executive Vice President and General Manager Chuck Soderberg covered several topics during his executive report, including

cybersecurity resources that are available to member cooperatives and the importance of embracing an “all-of-the-above” power generation strategy to ensure reliability for member-consumers. This was Soderberg’s final annual meeting report, as he plans to retire from the IAEC in July 2024.

During the business meeting portion, two directors were elected to the IAEC Board:

- » Jerry Keleher of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative was elected to serve a three-year term representing District 3, following Roger Solomonson’s departure.
- » Gordon Greimann of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative was reelected to serve a three-year term representing District 6.

The IAEC Board thanked Roger Solomonson for his leadership and service to Iowa’s electric cooperatives during his eight-year tenure. He was presented with a commemorative plaque during the business meeting in recognition of his exemplary service.

Following the annual meeting, the Board of Directors reorganized and voted on officers. 



**IOWA 811**  
**ONE CALL**<sup>SM</sup>

[www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com)

**LOG ON AT**  
[www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com)  
at least 48 hours before  
excavating to have  
underground utilities  
properly located.

You can also call 811.



# ECI REC Employees Honored at IAEC Annual Meeting

**THE IAEC HONORED** several electric cooperative employees and directors who celebrated 25 years of service in 2023, including two members of ECI REC's team:

- » Mike Adams, inventory maintenance technician
- » Doug Appelgate, SCADA technician

The IAEC also celebrated the first 15 graduates of its new Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP), including these ECI REC team members:

- » Jennifer Schmitz, manager of finance
- » Pat Hyland, system controller

Participants committed to a yearlong calendar of in-person, virtual, and on-demand training sessions, where they gained leadership skills and learned about various cooperative roles.

ECI REC leaders shared their thoughts on these accomplishments.

"Congratulations to you both on 25 years! Mike is one of the most dedicated and devoted employees to keeping the shop clean and organized. We are lucky to have him as a friend and on our team. Doug strives for excellence in keeping ECI REC's SCADA system up and working—we couldn't do it without him."

- *Operations Manager Tom Schmitt*

"On behalf of ECI REC's employees and the Board of Directors, we congratulate Jennifer and Pat on their successful completion of CLIP! Thank you for your dedication to ECI REC and its members. Jennifer served us for 25 years as a cost records supervisor and was promoted to manager of finance in 2020. Pat's career includes 26 years as a lineworker and 5 years as an engineering design technician before he was promoted to system controller in 2021." - *CEO Teresa Floyd* 🐾



## Don't Forget to Set Up Your Online Co-Op Connections® Account!

*a Community Connected reminder*

**THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS WEBSITE** is robust, easy-to-use, and member-focused. When you set up an online account, you have easy access to:

- » Healthy savings benefits like dental, vision, and pharmacy discounts
- » Savings on automotive services, clothing, accessories, dining, groceries, and event and movie tickets
- » Insurance discounts
- » Resources for booking hotels, concerts, and sporting events

To register, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop). In the top menu, you'll find a "Create Account" button. After clicking, you'll be taken through the steps of creating a personalized dashboard featuring your profile information, your history of savings, and your saved offers.

If you have questions about setting up your Co-Op Connections account, please call 877-850-4343 or email [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop). 🐾

An advertisement for the newly redesigned SmartHub website. It features a green background with the 'smart hub' logo and the text 'NEWLY REDESIGNED SMARTHUB'. Below this, it says 'Save time and money by managing your account at anytime from anywhere.' A computer monitor displays the SmartHub interface, showing a dashboard with various account management options. At the bottom, a green banner reads 'Visit [ecirec.smarthub.coop](http://ecirec.smarthub.coop) for more information!'.

## SMARTHUB Is Simpler to Use!

*an Energy Wise update*

SmartHub users will see a more user-friendly interface in early 2024!

- ✓ The technological foundation will not change—you'll be using the same bill payment tools.
- ✓ You'll have a simplified menu structure that will make it easier to navigate SmartHub and connect directly with ECI REC.
- ✓ Your usage and payment details will also be front and center for fast, easy access!

# Winter Operations Update

*a Keeping the Lights On article*

**THE OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT** had another great year! The safety of our employees and members is the number one priority at ECI REC. Our crews have been working safely and efficiently to provide outstanding service to our members. We continue to conduct monthly safety meetings for all employees with the assistance of the IAEC Safety Team and other outside presenters. We cover a wide spectrum of topics, including:

- » Hazard recognition
- » Pole-top and basket rescue
- » First aid/CPR
- » Office safety

Our Operations personnel also have opportunities to attend continuing education sessions on topics like metering, transformer connections, and tree trimming. We invest in our employees through leadership training and other continuing education programs.

East-Central Iowa REC continues to use Badgerland Utility Solutions to inspect the integrity of poles and underground cabinets. Badgerland uses ultrasound and infrared equipment to look for damaged or decayed poles and hot spots in underground facilities. In 2023, they inspected the BECCA, Rowley, and Walker substation areas. Thanks to the great weather last fall, they were able to get ahead of schedule and complete planned 2024 pole inspections at the Lindahl, Harrison, Bryantsburg, and Sumner substation areas. Our crews will follow up on needed maintenance throughout the year.

Nelson Electric also utilizes infrared technology to inspect our substations annually. This technology allows us to identify components that are beginning to deteriorate and fix them before they cause outages. To the right is a picture of a deteriorated connection identified by Nelson that our crews recently replaced at the Homer substation.

Winter is when your Cooperative crews conduct a visual line inspection on all

facilities. The crew will either fix deficiencies as they are found or create job orders so those deficiencies can be repaired or replaced later. We will also be working on recloser maintenance. Reclosers are maintained on a rotating cycle. We have started to replace some with electronic reclosers, which require less maintenance and provide more information regarding outages.

Tree trimming is an ongoing maintenance activity for us. In 2024, we will focus on the Van Horne and Shady Grove areas, utilizing in-house resources and contract crews.

As a capital improvement project, we continue to replace aging infrastructure with new conductor and poles with shorter spans that hold up to ice and wind. We are also installing underground cable in certain situations where trees or other hazards are present.

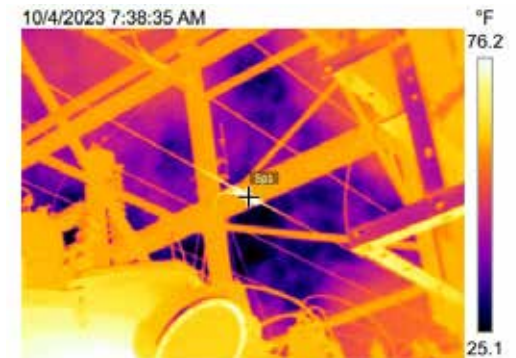
Thanks to the maintenance and capital improvement projects outlined above—and some help from Mother Nature—2023 outage minutes were kept to near-record levels. The complete 2023 outage report will be provided in the next newsletter.

As always, contact us early in the process when you are considering making changes to your electrical usage, so we can be prepared to meet your needs. We look forward to serving you in 2024! 🙌



Lineworker Brooks Erickson makes repairs at the Homer substation in Benton County.

*Photo credit: Pat Hyland*



The infrared reading from Nelson Electric that identified a component to replace.

*Photo credit: Nelson Electric*

## Are Your Account Phone Numbers Current?

Did you know our consumer software links your account information with your primary and secondary phone numbers? If you call to report an outage or a concern, our personnel can help you more quickly if your numbers in these two fields are current. In today's mobile world, you may want to consider updating your primary and secondary phone numbers, especially if you have:

- ✓ Disconnected your landline, or you do not use it as a primary point of contact
- ✓ Changed your cell phone number or provider

To access the form online, scan the code or choose Member Information Update Request from the Account Services menu at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop).







# ECI REC Invites Local Legislators to Urbana Headquarters

*a Looking Out for You update*

Photo credit: Lisa Franck



Photo credit: Kaitie Stadbein

Senators Charlie McClintock (left) and Eric Giddens (right) joined ECI REC CEO Teresa Floyd (center) for an overview of the cooperative business model in November.

## FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING,

ECI REC's management team and Board of Directors met with two members of the Iowa legislature: Senators Charlie McClintock and Eric Giddens. CEO Teresa Floyd gave an overview of Iowa's electric cooperatives and the co-op business model. She also shared ECI REC's mission and vision, as well as a few high-level stats on our distribution system, membership, and service area.

Both Senators were very appreciative of ECI REC's invitation and the opportunity to put names with faces. They told the group that it's invaluable to be able to go back to the Capitol and say they have met with us and have our contact information as a credible resource, if or when a need arises. CEO Floyd thanked the senators for their continued support and wished them a successful 2024 legislative session. 🌱

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY

## TIP OF THE MONTH

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.

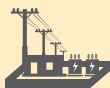


## You're Not Alone in the Dark

When a power outage happens, ECI REC springs into action. Here's the process we follow to ensure power is restored quickly and safely. It all starts with identifying what distribution equipment in what location has been damaged or is experiencing an interruption.



Occasionally during a major storm, transmission towers are damaged. Repairing these is the responsibility of our power supplier and is top priority.



High-voltage transmission stations power ECI REC's 25 distribution substations. If the issue is isolated and can be resolved here, thousands of members get their power restored at once.



Next, crews inspect distribution lines between substations and the meters they serve. If the distribution lines can be repaired, power can be restored to the meters on those lines.



If your lights are out but your neighbors' are blazing, call ECI REC at 877-850-4343 right away so we can send a line crew to your home.

Scan to watch a video from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association explaining the steps co-ops go through to restore power.



## Consider running for the Board of Directors continued from page 12

In the broadest terms, it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to decide how to protect and use the resources of the Cooperative to provide the most benefits for the membership. Through the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation, the membership has delegated certain authority to the Board. The Board uses this authority to accomplish certain basic jobs. For example, it communicates with the membership to determine what members most want and need from ECI REC. The Board then uses this information to establish a direction for ECI REC that will result in specific outcomes. Then the Board reports back to the membership on how well these outcomes are being achieved. Finally, the Board governs the Cooperative through a series of written policies that guide the activities of the Board and the CEO.

Per the NRECA, a director must have time to attend monthly Board meetings, other special meetings, and educational seminars. These sessions are necessary to keep directors informed of the business of the Cooperative and the electric utility industry. At ECI REC, regular Board meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month. Meetings normally begin at 8:00 a.m. and adjourn by noon. However, directors should be prepared to meet into the afternoon.

June's regular Board meeting coincides with the Annual Meeting of the Members. ECI REC directors are expected to attend both meetings. At the reorganizational meeting held directly after the Annual Meeting, the Board elects officers and designates voting delegates and alternates to affiliated organizations.

ECI REC directors are also encouraged to attend meetings of affiliated organizations on a state, national, and regional level. The statewide organization sponsors a grassroots advocacy program, and directors are invited to

participate in these related events.

Finally, ECI REC directors are encouraged to seek training so they can fulfill their responsibilities to the membership to the best of their ability. New directors are strongly encouraged to obtain their Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate within their first term of service.

The time commitment for serving on the Board of Directors is on average one-and-a-half days per month. There could be 10–20 additional days per year, depending on the director's level of engagement and training opportunities. Directors serve a three-year term before seeking reelection. For their service, directors are compensated per monthly meeting plus mileage expenses.

### WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A DIRECTOR?

- » A director has the duty of being loyal to the Cooperative.
- » A director must always avoid any conflicts of interest.
- » A director must treat confidential information accordingly.
- » A director must not do anything that harms the Cooperative, including publicly criticizing the actions of the Board.
- » A director has the duty of obedience, meaning he or she needs to be aware of and obey the obligations and requirements in the law that govern the activities of the Cooperative.
- » A director has a duty of due care and diligence.
- » According to the Model Business Corporation Act, a director shall perform his or her duties as a director, including his or her duties as a member of any committee of the Board upon which he or she may serve, in good faith, in a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation, and with such care



The Board of Directors at work during the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Members.

Photo credit: Lisa Franck

as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A DIRECTOR?

Article VII, Section 3 of the Articles of Incorporation of the Cooperative list the below eligibility requirements for an individual to be nominated, elected, or appointed to the ECI REC Board of Directors. These same requirements must be met to remain a director.

- » To be a member of the Cooperative.
- » To have one's primary residence in the sub-district he or she is to represent.
- » To receive electric service from the Cooperative at that primary residence.
- » Must not be in any way employed by or have extensive financial interests in a competing enterprise, be employed by or have extensive financial interests in a business selling electric energy or electrical supplies to the Cooperative, or be employed by or have extensive financial interests in a business engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures, or supplies to members of the Cooperative.
- » Must not be a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, corresponding in-law or "step" relation, cohabitant, or any other





## Is my bathroom safe for all?

Do you hog the bathroom? According to a YouGov survey, 38% of women and 21% of men spend more than 30 minutes each day getting ready. That is 7.6 days spent in the bathroom each year, people.

Do not underestimate the potential for electrical hazards in your house's smallest room. **To stay safe while primping or getting clean:**

1. Ensure ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are installed and working properly.
2. Use all electrical appliances away from the sink, tub, toilet and shower.
3. Make sure cords and electrical items are in good condition.
4. Do not extend a cord's reach to use a cell phone (or another device) near the tub or shower.
5. Do not plug too many things into an outlet or circuit.
6. Ensure light fixtures in the shower are covered and exhaust fans are free from lint, dirt and grime.
7. Make sure your bathroom meets local and National Electrical Code requirements.

Learn more at:



## Consider running for the Board of Directors

continued from page 10

family member who resides within the household of an employee of the Cooperative.

Directors matter! Let's make a difference together. To learn more about the nominating process or the qualifications and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, please contact the Nominating Committee member serving the Board district in which you could run (see page 4). You can also visit [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop), call 877-850-4343, or email [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop).

## 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

Please email your ad to [classifieds@ecirec.coop](mailto:classifieds@ecirec.coop). Ads for the March/April 2024 Heartland Link must be received by February 1, 2024.

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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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](http://www.ecirec.coop)



### 24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub

See account information at [ecirec.smarthub.coop](http://ecirec.smarthub.coop) or download the app.



### Outage Center & Map

View current outages via SmartHub or at [outages.ecirec.coop:81](http://outages.ecirec.coop:81).



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**BOARD PRESIDENT  
STEVE RAU**

## Make a Difference in ECI REC

### Consider running for the Board of Directors

*a Cooperative Difference message from Board President Steve Rau*

**ARE YOU INTERESTED** in serving on the ECI REC Board of Directors? It's an incredibly important position in our community—our directors set policies and approve programs that form the basis for operating your Cooperative. This is a great responsibility and requires men and women who understand their communities' needs and care deeply about members' best interests.

It is important to have a pool of strong candidates, which is why we encourage members to run in our Board elections. Fresh ideas and new perspectives help us enact policies that keep our communities competitive. There are economic benefits to having a well-managed and forward-looking electric cooperative Board—if this sounds like a fit for you, please consider running in the upcoming Board election (see page 4 for more details).

### **WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DIRECTOR?**

Directors are expected to demonstrate three basic qualities on behalf of ECI REC and our member-consumers: care, loyalty, and obedience.