

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## Geothermal: The Other Renewable Energy

Story on page 3

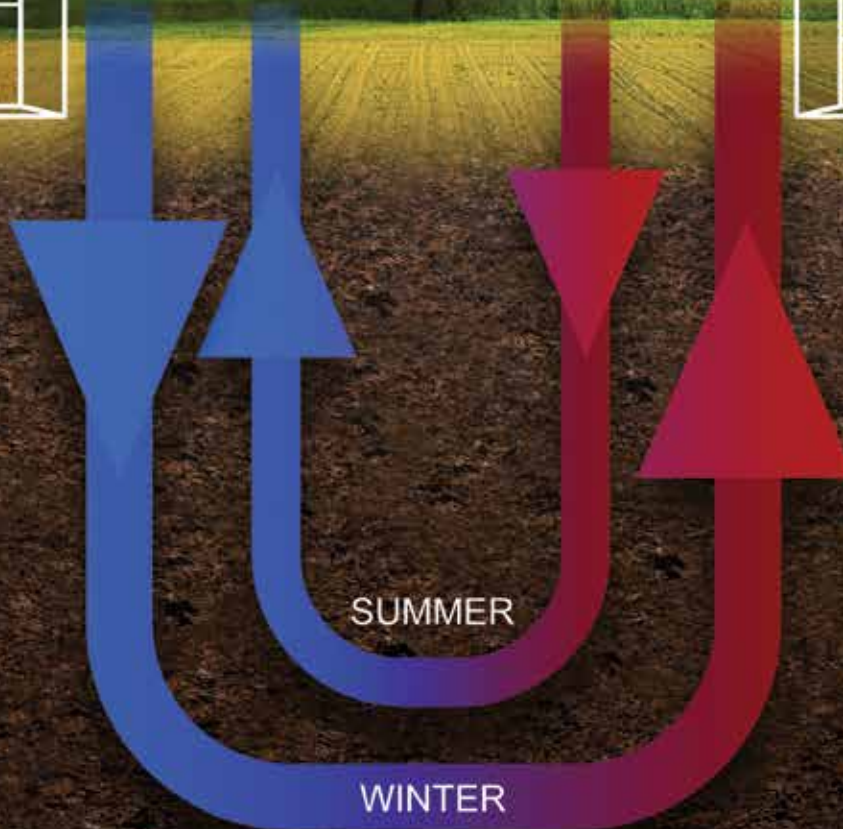


Photo credit: © Francesco Scatena | Dreamstime.com

### WELCOME BACK!

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Cooperative reps meet with legislators as session resumes.

### DIRECTOR EDUCATION

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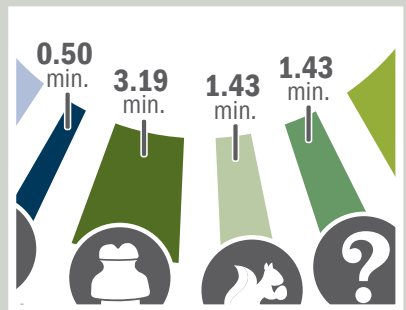
How your directors stay informed and empowered to lead.



### RELIABILITY RESULTS

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Best-ever outage rates in 2023.



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# Support Iowa's Renewable Energy Production

You can volunteer to support the development of renewable energy production facilities in Iowa via your monthly bill. Per month in 2023, an average of 67 ECI REC members contributed an average of \$4.20 each to the program. Member support for the year totaled \$3,383.10.

Scan the QR code to find more details on our website and fill out the form.



*Photo credit: Michael Lynch, NRECA*

## take the member challenge

- 1. ENERGY WISE:** \_\_\_\_\_ is also clean, with emissions as low as solar, wind, and hydropower.
- 2. COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE:** The Board plays a crucial role in determining the \_\_\_\_\_ and priorities of ECI REC.
- 3. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON:** By understanding these \_\_\_\_\_, we can collectively work toward enhancing the reliability of ECI REC's distribution system.

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](mailto: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 April 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 January/February *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

James R. Dolan	Howard Purdy
Richard J. Goedken	Frank Michael
Joseph B. McIntosh	William J. Balsanek
Sara M. Smith	John Reiss
James D. Hoffman	Joel Wichgers
Ray A. Kamin, Jr.	Bruce Anderson
Michelle L. Cheever	Geraldene F. Ries
Alfred Williams, Jr.	Gary L. Mills

## Calendar Notes

**MARCH 10 –**  
Daylight Saving Time

**MARCH 24 –**  
Palm Sunday

**MARCH 29 –**  
Good Friday

**MARCH 31 –** Easter

## Contact ECI REC

### EMAILS

[memberservices@ecirec.coop](mailto:memberservices@ecirec.coop)  
(rebates, product sales)

[csr@ecirec.coop](mailto:csr@ecirec.coop)  
(billing, new customers)

**WEBSITE**  
[www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop)

**MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
Teresa Floyd  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ext. 450  
[teresa.floyd@ecirec.coop](mailto:teresa.floyd@ecirec.coop)

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Operations Manager  
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Adam Albertsen  
Manager of Member Service  
Ext. 503  
[adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop](mailto:adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop)

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Manager of Communications  
Ext. 472  
[lisa.franck@ecirec.coop](mailto:lisa.franck@ecirec.coop)

Nathan Groom  
Information Services Manager  
Ext. 410  
[nathan.groom@ecirec.coop](mailto: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)

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

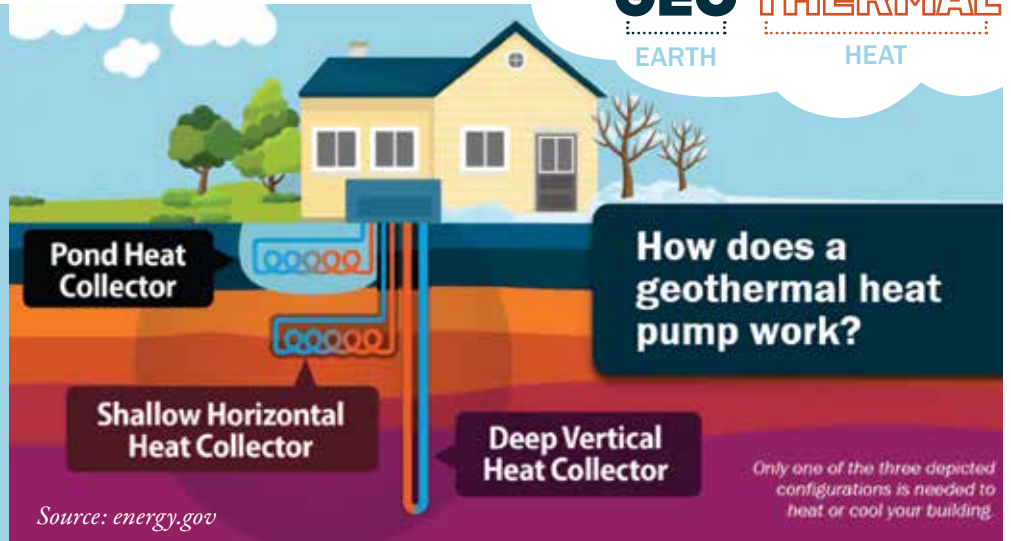
# Geothermal: The Other Renewable Energy

an Energy Wise feature

**GEO THERMAL**  
EARTH HEAT

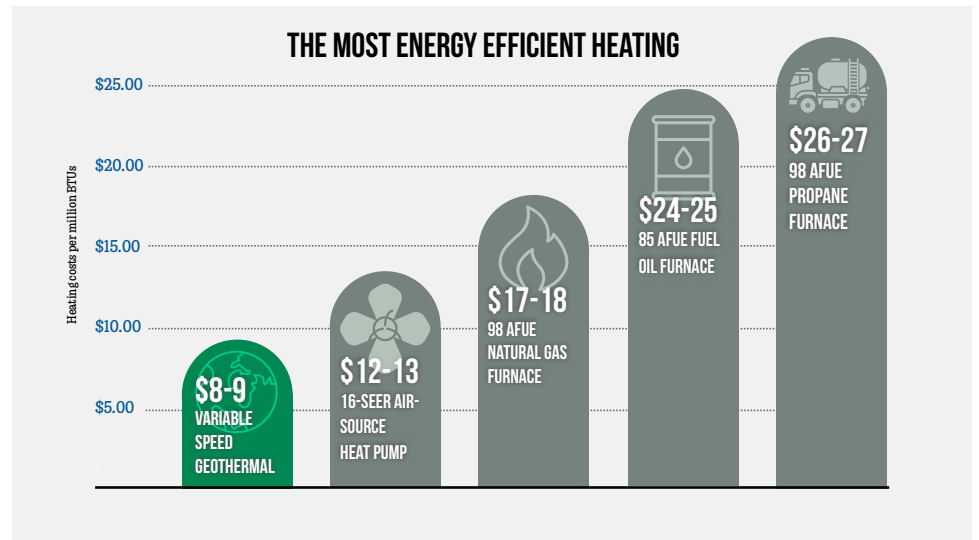
## What is geothermal energy?

“Geothermal” literally means “heat from the earth.” Geothermal energy is a renewable heat source found under the surface of the earth. It is reliable because it is always available, regardless of weather conditions. Geothermal is also clean, with emissions as low as solar, wind, and hydropower.



## What are geothermal heat pumps?

- » Geothermal heat pumps (GHPs) are clean, efficient systems for heating and cooling that can be installed in various ways.
- » GHPs may also supply your home with a steady stream of hot water, reducing your energy costs.
- » GHPs take advantage of constant underground temperatures to efficiently exchange temperatures, heating homes in the winter and cooling homes in the summer.
- » The diagram to the right shows what types of GHP systems are available for use in homes and other buildings.



Based on a 2,500-square-foot home in the Midwest. Electricity: \$0.12/kWh - Natural gas: \$1.50/eef - Fuel oil: \$2.28/gal. - Propane: \$2.19/gal.

Source: The Geothermal Exchange Organization via GeoLink Design Studio/arboroaks.com

## Why are geothermal heat pumps good for cooperative members?

- » They have the lowest operating cost of any heating/cooling system available to members today.
- » They are recognized by the EPA as a renewable energy source.
- » Federal tax credits are available for residential and commercial properties.
- » ECI REC offers rebates.
- » Members may qualify for ECI REC’s special Heat Plus rate.
- » They provide consistent comfort.
- » There is no outside central air conditioner noise.
- » The heating/cooling system is located inside the home.

## Advantages over other renewables

Geothermal heat pumps are not affected by:


- » Snow coverage
- » Overcast days
- » Extreme wind
- » Extreme temperatures
- » GHPs use electricity to transfer heat to and from the ground, so they help bring in revenue rather than take it away. 🌱

# Electric Cooperatives Brave Storm to Meet With State Legislators as 2024 Session Begins

*a Looking Out for You feature*

**SEVERE WINTER WEATHER** couldn't stop employees and directors from Iowa's electric cooperatives as they traveled to downtown Des Moines to discuss concerns and priorities with state legislators during the 2024 Welcome Back Legislative Reception. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the annual reception on January 9 in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, and FUEL Iowa.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2024 session and discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, we're concerned about the potential establishment of Integrate Resource Plans (IRPs) in Iowa Code. IRPs would essentially force the early retirement of carbon-based electric generation facilities, resulting in stranded costs and reliability concerns for the member-consumers we serve. Iowa's locally owned and governed electric cooperatives continue to support an "all-of-the-above" power generation strategy that ensures reliable and affordable electricity for our members.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, Iowa electric cooperatives will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues. We're hoping for better weather for our annual REC Day on the Hill event on March 12. Learn more about electric cooperative advocacy efforts at [iaruralpower.org](http://iaruralpower.org). 

## Enter the 2024 Youth Tour Essay Contest to Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.!

*a Community Connected update*

**DID YOU MISS ECI REC'S** Youth Tour application deadline? You can still win a trip to D.C. through the 2024 Youth Tour Essay Contest sponsored by *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine! To enter, you must submit an official entry form and a short (250-word maximum) essay in response to this statement: **Tell us about an issue that impacts the quality of life in your community.**

Entry forms are available at [iowarec.org/youth-tour](http://iowarec.org/youth-tour).

You can submit your essay at this website or email it to [youthtour@iowarec.org](mailto:youthtour@iowarec.org). Entries must be received by March 25.

### Official contest rules

*Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine will award one all-expenses-paid Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in addition to the Youth Tour trips sponsored by local electric cooperatives like ECI REC. The contest is open to:

- » Any Iowa high school sophomore, junior, or senior whose family is served by an Iowa electric cooperative
- » Any Iowa high school sophomore, junior, or senior who attended all three virtual sessions of the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy in October 2023


Students who have already applied for the Youth Tour through ECI REC may also enter the essay contest to enhance their chances of earning a trip. However, students chosen to be sponsored by ECI REC will become ineligible to win the trip sponsored by *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine.

Magazine and IAEC staff will judge all essays anonymously. The decision of the judges will be final. The winner of the contest will be announced on April 4, after all sponsoring local electric cooperatives have chosen their 2024 Youth Tour participants.

### One Iowa Youth Tour student will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship!

A student from each state that participates in the 2024 Youth Tour will be chosen to serve on the national Youth Leadership Council (YLC). The Iowa YLC representative will be selected during the Youth Tour trip and will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship.

These young leaders will meet virtually throughout 2024 and participate in leadership training, practice their public speaking skills, attend cooperative forums, and engage in community activities like voter registration drives.

The Youth Leadership Council experience will culminate at the March 2025 NRECA Annual Meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia. The group will spend a few days reflecting on the experiences they've had throughout the year, attend informational and entertaining conference sessions alongside electric cooperative leaders from across the country, and solidify lifelong friendships and connections! 

### NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK: APRIL 15-19



# Grain Bin Clearance Notice

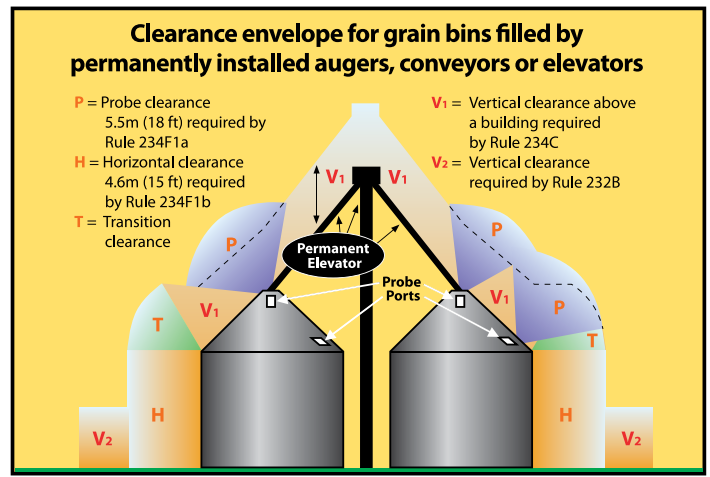
**AS REWARDING AS IT MAY BE**, farming is an extremely difficult job—it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At ECI REC, safety is a top priority for both our employees and our members. That’s why we are required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials.

The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors, and elevators. Whether you’re purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas with existing bins, you must consider proximity to overhead power lines. The drawings accompanying this article show the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact your Cooperative.

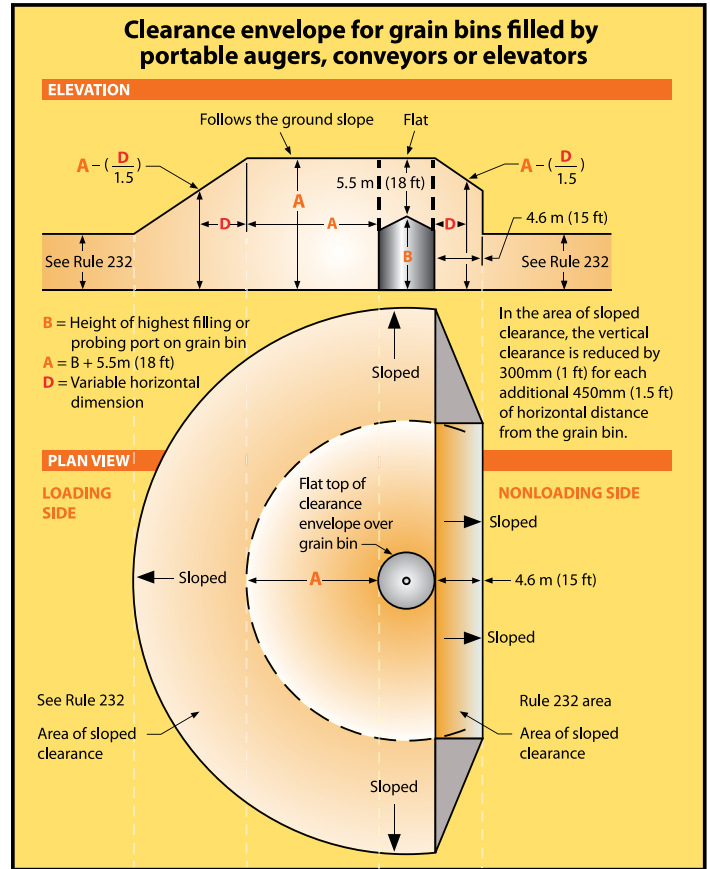
According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code, which is found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 – 25.2(3) b: An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line that does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 “National Electrical Safety Code,” Rule 234F. This paragraph “b” shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors, or elevators built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board.)

*DISCLAIMER: These drawings are provided as part of ECI REC’s annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.*

*Every care has been taken to ensure the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, ECI REC accepts no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes, or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.*



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## ATTENTION MEMBERS:



### Use Caution When Burning Ditches

Burning helps clean things up, but it can also cause extensive damage to Cooperative property, resulting in electric service problems.

Members involved in such fires may be invoiced for damage they cause to Cooperative property.

### TWO TIPS FOR SAFE BURNING

- 1 Green, or newer, poles are more susceptible to burning—use extra caution.
- 2 Always be aware of the locations of poles, anchor guy assemblies, underground cabinets, and other important Cooperative equipment when burning.



## Celebrate With ECI REC's 2024 Ag Rebates

an Energy Wise feature

### VENTILATION AND CIRCULATION

- » Ventilation fans (BESS lab rated at 0.10 in static pressure): \$3/in. (fan blade diameter)
- » Ventilation thermostat controllers with humidistats: \$25 each
- » Circulation fans (BESS lab rated at thrust/kW requirements): \$1/in. (fan blade diameter)
- » High-volume, low-speed fans (minimum 10 ft. diameter): \$35/ft. (fan blade diameter)

### DAIRY OPERATIONS

- » Dairy heat reclaimers: \$5 per milking cow
- » Dairy milk pre-coolers: \$4 per milking cow
- » VSD vacuum pumps: \$40/horsepower
- » Scroll compressors: \$250 each (must replace reciprocating compressor)


### LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

- » Electric-heated livestock waterers: \$50 each (≤ 175W per trough opening)
- » Single-crate heating pads: \$25/pad (≤ 85W)
- » Double-crate heating pads: \$50/pad (≤ 170W)
- » Heat lamps or pad controllers: \$50/controller

### HORTICULTURE LED FIXTURES

Horticulture lighting must be classified as such in the qualified products list published online at [designlights.org](https://designlights.org) by the DesignLights Consortium.

- » 8–14W, \$10/fixture
- » 15–49W, \$15/fixture
- » 50–99W, \$25/fixture
- » > 100W, \$40/fixture

Some conditions apply. Refer to the equipment rebate forms at [ecirec.coop](https://ecirec.coop) for qualifications and detailed requirements. 

# 5

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE INSTALLING HOME SOLAR

### 1

#### FIND OUT YOUR HOME'S ENERGY USE

Look at your energy bill(s) to review kWh usage for the past 12 to 24 months and calculate the average monthly usage.

### 2

#### CONTACT YOUR ELECTRIC UTILITY

Because most residential systems are tied to the power grid, reach out about safety and connection requirements and fees.

### 3

#### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Start considering panel location. Assess the age, size, and condition of your roof as well as available ground space.

### 4

#### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Ensure the company you are considering has installers who are specially trained and certified to install solar, among other factors.

### 5

#### GET SEVERAL QUOTES


There are costs other than equipment, such as permitting, installation, and inspection. Make sure all costs are included in quotes.

To learn more, visit [energy.gov](https://energy.gov) and search for "Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar." Use the dropdown titled "How Much Power Can I Generate with Solar" for information on PVWatts, a solar energy production and cost estimator.

## Installing On-Site Generation? Members Must Notify ECI REC

**FOR YOUR SAFETY AND OURS**, owners of alternative energy production facilities that will be attached to an electric transmission or distribution line are required to notify their utility. If you have questions, please contact ECI REC at 877-850-4343.

No matter how small, the owner of the facility is required to provide written notification to their utility of their intent to construct or install the facility at least 30 days prior to construction. In the written notice, you must provide information on the type of facility (solar-powered heat pumps, for example) and the anticipated completion date of the construction.

Alternative energy production facilities are defined as solar, wind turbine, waste management, resource recovery, refuse-derived fuel, agricultural crops or residues, or wood-burning facilities that are used to generate electricity. 

# Educated Directors Are Effective Leaders

*a Cooperative Difference feature*

**IT'S NO SECRET** that for leaders to be most effective, they must be knowledgeable about the industries and issues that could impact the organizations they serve. This is especially true in the electric industry.

At ECI REC, our Board of Directors—your local cooperative leaders, who are elected by their fellow members—guides us in providing electricity that is safe, affordable, reliable, and sustainable. The Board plays a crucial role in determining the strategic direction and priorities of ECI REC. Investing in valuable education and training for our Board helps ensure our leaders make informed decisions that will guide your Cooperative to a successful future as we power lives and empower the communities we serve.

Through our affiliations with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, our directors have valuable opportunities to attend governance education courses and industry conferences, where they learn about the latest challenges, trends, regulations, and technologies affecting electric cooperatives. In fact, our national association manages an extensive credential program for electric cooperative directors. This program includes opportunities to earn Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificates and Board Leadership Certificates.

These programs are especially important for newer directors, as they must quickly learn about their roles and responsibilities and understand the challenges and issues unique to the electric industry. Many of these education courses are provided here in Iowa, which helps us manage costs. 🌱

**Six ECI REC directors have received Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificates. Four of these six have also obtained Board Leadership and Director Gold Certificates.**

## BOARD LEADERSHIP

Jeff Elliott, Vice President  
Julie Kester, Assistant Secretary/  
Treasurer  
Ryan Kress, Secretary/Treasurer  
Steve Rau, President

## CREDENTIALLED COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR

Jeff Elliott  
Julie Kester  
Ryan Kress  
Gary McKenna  
Steve Rau  
Don Shonka

## DIRECTOR GOLD CREDENTIAL

Jeff Elliott  
Gary McKenna  
Steve Rau  
Don Shonka



**CALL 811  
BEFORE YOU DIG**

For projects big or small, call at least two to three days prior to digging.

**Safe  
Electricity.org**

## April Is Safe Digging Month

Spring is near, and you may be planning outdoor projects. Whether it's a deck addition, planting a tree, trenching in fields, or a landscaping masterpiece, remember to call Iowa One Call by dialing 811 before you dig. Although light gardening typically doesn't call for deep digging, other seemingly simple tasks like planting shrubs or installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines. A severed line can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm the person digging, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

# 2023 ECI REC Reliability Review

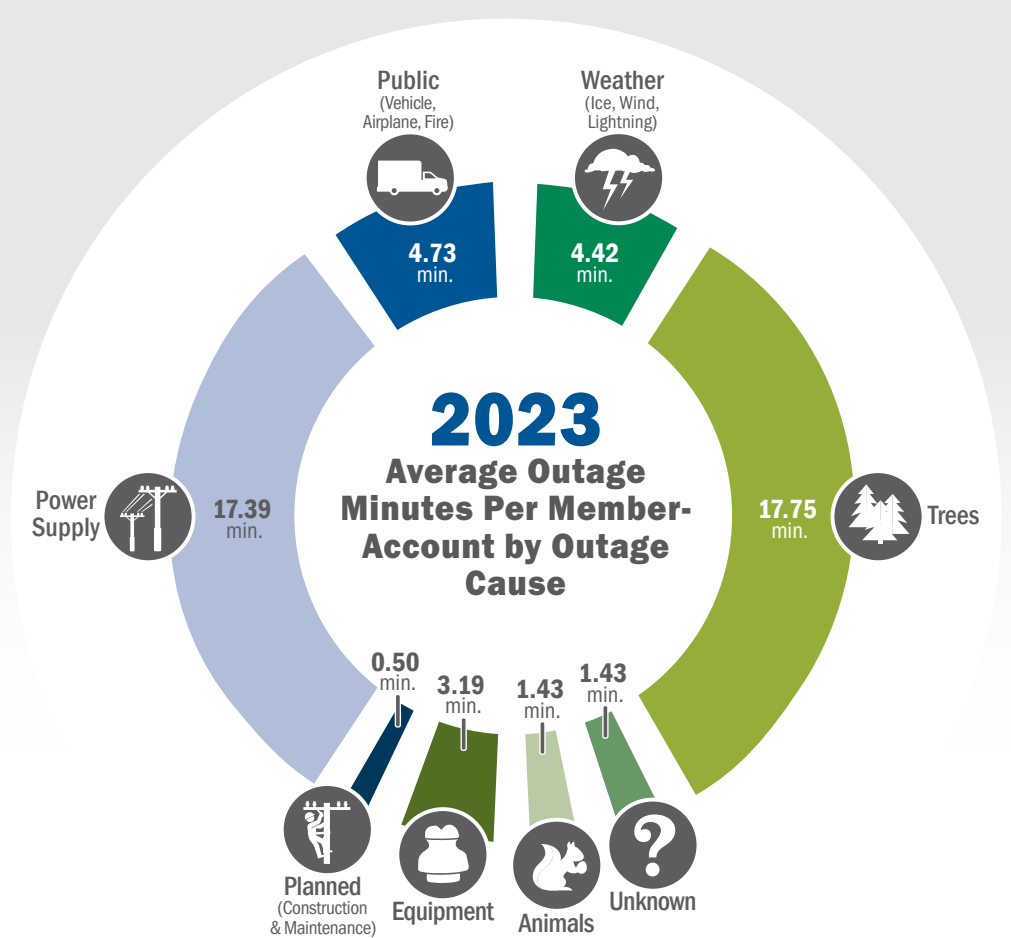
*a Keeping the Lights On update*

As we continue our commitment to keeping our membership connected, it's important to shed light on the factors that influence the outages experienced by our members. By understanding these causes, we can collectively work toward enhancing the reliability of ECI REC's distribution system. The graph here illustrates the causes of outages in 2023 and the percentage of impact each category was responsible for.

The categories shaded in green represent outages ECI REC could reasonably expect to control.

Thanks to our ongoing commitment to Work Plan improvements, vegetation control, animal protection, and system design, we had a record-setting year in 2023, with the lowest ever outage minutes in these categories (28.2 minutes per member-account). The remainder of the graph represents the categories that could not be directly controlled by ECI REC. These categories include power supply, public-caused outages, and planned outages.

While 2023 was a relatively quiet year weather-wise, ECI REC is nevertheless very proud of our accomplishments. It is truly a team effort to reach these goals. Congratulations to our directors and employees on their ongoing commitment to providing the best possible service to our members! 🌱



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

**BE PREPARED**  
FOR SEVERE WEATHER TO STRIKE

Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area it is raining.

**March 25-29 is Severe Weather Awareness Week.**  
**MAKE A PLAN | BUILD A KIT | BE AWARE**  
Tips and tools: [ready.iowa.gov](http://ready.iowa.gov)

**Safe Electricity.org**



# Help Us Find These Former Members

a Cooperative Difference report

**LAST SEPTEMBER**, the Board of Directors of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative voted to retire \$453,324 in patronage back to its members. These margins represent 100% of its 2008 margins. They were credited to current members on their October bills. Former members were sent checks. The 90-day window to cash these checks has now passed, and the people listed below have not yet cashed their checks. These dividends will be forfeited to the Cooperative if not claimed within one year.

If you know of someone listed below, please contact that person, or their next of kin, and ask them to contact our office. ECI REC will require personal identification and/or legal documentation from these people to confirm their membership before dividends can be claimed. Please do not contact ECI REC unless you have the necessary documentation for the member listed. This list was current at the time of this printing.

Abbott, Joel E.	Clayton, Cara L.	Hanna, Norma	Kirchner, Angie M.	Miersen, Matt J.	Rausch, Greg	Steinbron, Dave L.
Adair, Dean	Clayton, Samantha	Hansen, Jon	Kleiman, Mike W.	Miller, Deanna	Ready Room Storage	Steinke, Shane E.
Adair, Jacy	Clement, Jeni J.	Hansen, T.L.	Kloubec, Gary L.	Miller, Thad J.	Redmond, Justin	Stephenson, Edward C.
Airy, Philip W.	Clinton, Erwin L.	Hanson, Cyd A.	Knudsen, Trent A.	Mohr, Jenny	Reil, Ronald	Stevens, Nancy
Allen Sr, Robert L.	Connell, David	Hanson, Dwight	Kober, Kay L.	Moise, Joel	Remington Hybrid	Stewart, Brad
Alton, Jason P.	Countryman, Betty J.	Hanson, Edward R.	Koch, Francis J.	Morgan, Justin A.	Seed	Stewart, Rita M.
Alvarez, Kathrine	Courtier, Lynn	Hanzlik, Kaye J.	Koontz, Shelly J.	Morrow, Shirley M.	Rempfer, Jacob W.	Stilwell, Ruth
Amsden, Steven C.	Covington, Jennifer K.	Harder, Jerrine	Kotouc, Charles	Murphy, Todd A.	Renfrue, Deborah	Straw, Robin
Anderson, Nadine	Cox, Dana	Harkin, Patricia	Krempges, Steve M.	Musallam, Maher J.	Richter, Randall	Strow, Chuck
Anderson, Robert	Coyle, Dennis R.	Harris, Richard	Kuhn, Darrell E.	Neighbors, Joseph C.	Rider, Amy M.	Struchen, Thomas D.
Aragon, Dennis	Cram, Kelly M.	Hart, Brian L.	Kuper, Robert L.	Nelsen, Fred M.	Road Runner Custom	Stueck, Gene
Armstrong, Robert S.	Criswell, Brent	Heiserman, David J.	LaGrange, Irene M	Newman-Koester,	Machine, LLC	Suchy, Teresa A.
Ashlock, Donn	Heit, Brian J.	Helbert, Michael	Estate	Donna	Robinson, Carl L.	Sutton, Donna
Avant, Jordan	Csongradi, William	Hersom, Stanley	Laing, Jerry D.	Newton, Garland F.	Rolf, Frank E.	T 2, LLC
Backer, Harry L.	Dahlstrom, Mark R.	Hertzberg, Veronica	Lane, Donald	Neyman, Gregory P.	Rommann, Randall L.	Taken, Almore L.
Baker, Ryan	Darland, Jackie	Hettinger, Shirley M.	Lang, Evelyn	Niemann	Root, Jon M.	Taylor, Gerald W.
Barbee, Dee L.	Dean, Jeffrey	Heyer, Barbara E.	Lang, Neil J.	Construction Co.	Rote, Sandra A.	Taylor, Lindsay
Barbour, Melia D.	Deardorff, David	Hicks, John Ed	Leckness, Emily A.	Noe, Melvin	Rozek, Chris	Tempus, Thomas J.
Beauregard, Scott P.	Demoss, Corey	Hobbs, Amos D.	Leighton-Dick,	Noeller, Kerry L.	Rueber, Betty E.	Thode, Michael J.
Beck, Neil	Donnelly, John	Hockey, Linda	Edouard L.	Nosbisch, Jaime S.	Ryden, Alan L.	Thomas
Becker, Wayne M.	Duenas, Patrick	Hockey, Richard	Lewis, Melody	Novak, Brent E.	Salviati, Lara M.	Construction, LLC
Benard, Vincent C.	Duffield, Curtis L.	Hofmaster, Michael A.	Lilja, Clarice M.	Novak, Doreen A.	Sandberg, Jaclyn J.	Thomas, Robert H.
Bennett, David W.	Dunn, Chris	Hogan, Therese J.	Lindaman, Joel D.	Novak, Janet L.	Sanders, Steven C.	Thompson Properties
Betts, Kimberly J.	Eastin, Craig	Holub, Gary L.	Lindaman, Larry	Nurre, James T.	Sasse, Robert L.	Tiffany, Monica
Blood, Karin B.	Eckes, William C.	Hoppenworth, Kreg	Lindemier, David R.	Obrien, Tom A.	Schild, Russell R.	Timm, Matt
Blue Sky Satellite	Eckman, Gregory	Hoskins, James F.	Long, John S.	Oconnor, Carl	Schlemmer, Linda	Timm, Willie
Boelter, Velma	Edgewood Feedmill	Houge, Sherlock	Lorenz, Larry D.	Oconnor, John R.	Schminke, Pam	Titcomb, Stephen
Bollman, Tammy S.	Edwin Davis, Mrs.	Houtakker, Alan M.	Ludolph, Seth	Oldham, John W.	Schmitz, Jackie	Van Deusen, Susan
Bonnett, Dewayne A.	Ekstrand, Burr	Hughes, Jim	Lunkley, Tom	Oneill, Edward	Schmuecker, Gerald	Varney, Mike
Bourget, Tige	Ellis, Shauna L.	Hummell, Jason L.	Makin, Karol N.	Ortner, Eugene A.	Schoettmer, Jennifer	Vaughn, Roger
Boyer, Ron	Embray, Devin	Hunter, John	Malek, John	Osborn, Brein E.	Schultz, Richard	Viswanatha, Jahnvi C.
Brandley, Sonia	Engledow, Melissa R.	Hunty, John	Marshall, Gregg A.	Owen, David L.	Schwarzoff, Kevin	Voelker, Curtis S.
Brann, Erma	Enos, Gerald L.	Iben Custom Homes	Maulson, Dennis D.	Paris, Jeremy	Scott, Darrell D.	Vogl, Erin
Brazil, Anthony E.	Fencil, David P.	Ingalls, Loren	Mcallister, Steven D.	Parr, Joseph A.	Seeman, Michael C.	Walker, James E.
Brekke, Todd	Fleming, Roger	Ingraham, Kaitlyn M.	Mccann, Cassie A.	Patava, Robert Estate	Seemann, Tim D.	Washburn, Duane L.
Brewer, John	Foels, Mark	Irene Karr Estate	Mccann, Kevin	Patton, Lisa M.	Shakespeare, Terri L.	Weeks, Rob
Brimmer, Frank R.	Fowlkes Jr, Arthur P.	Jebe Estate, Mary	Mccord, Thomas R.	Paul, Sharon R.	Shannon, Michael D.	West, Mark L.
Brinkema, Jack E.	Fowlkes, Ronald L.	Jenkins, Joe W.	Mccormick, Robert J.	Peachee, Freda	Shay, Larry	West, William Estate
Broadrick, John R.	French, Paul O.	Johnson, Douglas C.	Mccurdy, Philip	Peacock, Donald	Sherman, Barbara J.	Whipple, Charles
Brown, Adam R.	Frickson, Wayne A.	Johnson, Kate	Mcintee, Kristine	Peacock, Randy	Sherrets Jr,	White, Curt
Brown, Andrew P.	Geater, Mike	Johnson, Robert K.	Mcintosh, Juanita K.	Peake, Ethel	Kenneth D.	Widener, Tim
Brown, Diane S.	Geiger, June I.	Jones, Donna	Mckinley Hilmer,	Pershy, Todd	Showalter, Judy A.	Wieditz, Mitch
Buck, John	Gibbs, Marlene I.	Jordan, Max R.	Janet	Pershy-Lopata, Dawn	Shultice Trust	Wiegand, Kirk
Bumgarner, Kimberly	Gilson, Darci M.	Juergens, Jerry	Mckinney, Richard	Peters, Chad	Shultz, John D.	Wilkinson, Amy J.
Burch, Douglas	Glendenning, Ron A.	Kaminski, Alissa	Mcmanus, Judy L.	Pettengill, Raymond	Silhanek, Rod	Wilson, Jimmy
Burnell, Dona J.	Good, Frank	Kane, Mickey R.	Mcmurrian, Doris M.	Pieper, Genevieve	Sjobakken, Erik	Windover, David H.
Burnell, Keith	Goodall, Ray B.	Kayser, Mindy L.	Mehlert, Chad	Estate	Slick, Steve A.	Wipperman, Jamie
Butters, Doris E.	Goodall, Virginia	Kearney, William	Merriveather, Ernest J.	Pierce, Roberta M.	Smith, Dan L.	Wright, Aaron L.
Cannon, Kristine O.	Greaser, Margaret	Kelly, Thomas	Metcalf, Linda C.	Pipho, Shayne	Smith, Erika L.	Yock, John
Carpenter, Sheila D.	Griffith, Bernice F.	Kennett, John A.	Meyer, Daniel	Pippert, Dale	Smith, Walter W.	Yunker, Gerald W.
Carr, Timothy A.	Grindley, Gary A.	Kenney, Leland	Michel, Larry J.	Pippert, Jerrine M.	Snider, James E.	Zasadny, Valerie V.
Chaffee, Mark	Gusta, Shannon K.	Keppler, Mary	Midwest Land	Pirillo, Dominick	Sondag, Brian L.	Ziegler, Donald D.
Chappell, Matt	Hackett, George A.	Kinder Morgan	Ventures	Potter, Donald K.	Sonka, Jamie	Zuck, Levi J.
Childress, April	Halverson, Josh	Energy Partners LP	Midwest Welding &	Primrose, Kelley J.	Specialty Proteins, LLC	Zweigart, Regis
Chinchar, Brent	Hamblin, Mary	Kintzle, Alice M.	Fabrication	Pugh, Robert D.	Speckner, Dale W.	
Clark, Roberta	Hamilton, Tracy			Rasmussen, Deb J.	Spreen, Barry	

**Patronage represents the margins, or profits, that the Cooperative earns on electricity purchased by its member-accounts. These margins are the member-accounts' equity in East-Central Iowa REC. The Cooperative uses this equity to maintain its poles and wires, rebuild its distribution system, and pay expenses. When ECI REC's financial condition allows, these margins are returned back to the members who generated them. In the past 10 years, ECI REC has returned \$5,261,706 to its members.**

## 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](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop).

## Burroughs Receives Journey Line Maintainer Certificate

*a Keeping the Lights On shout-out*



**AT OUR JANUARY** safety meeting, Operations Manager Tom Schmitt presented a Journey Line Maintainer Certificate and wallet card from the Iowa Department of Labor to Lineworker Bryce Burroughs. The journey line maintainer apprenticeship program is registered with the U.S./Iowa Department of Labor. It is a four-year, 7,000-hour commitment that provides lineworkers with occupation-related instruction and hands-on experience.

Bryce works out of the Vinton Operations Center and has been with ECI REC for seven years. Nice job and congratulations, Bryce! 🎉

## ECI REC Engineering Technician Graduates From Prestigious Management Program

*a Keeping the Lights On spotlight*



**WE ARE CELEBRATING** Engineering Technician Scott McLaughlin, who recently graduated from an intensive program in electric utility management! The Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program (MIP) is a series of workshops offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin. The program guides participants through all facets of the electric utility industry.

Congratulations, Scott! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to keeping the lights on for our members. 🎉

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE!

### March Anniversaries



**DAVE HENKES**  
Engineering Design  
Technician - 29 years



**COLTON WOLFE**  
Lineworker - 6 years



**TRENT KOOPMANN**  
Apprentice  
Lineworker - 2 years

### April Anniversaries



**DOUG APPELGATE**  
SCADA Technician  
26 years



**ROBERT DERIFIELD**  
Information Services  
Technician - 12 years



**JOSH COX**  
Lineworker - 6 years



**NATHAN GROOM**  
Information Services  
Manager - 17 years

# Message From the CEO

continued from page 12

your Cooperative. While the decision to raise electric rates is not an easy one, our continued commitment to maintaining a high level of service comes at a cost. When we prepared the 2023 budget, we expected a significant increase in our wholesale power cost. Thankfully, this did not happen. Instead, our power supplier (CIPCO) lowered our rate twice during 2023. These decreases were passed on to you via the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). We had projected an average PCA of \$0.012/kWh, but it ended up being half of that at \$0.006/kWh. This provided an annual savings of \$86 for a residential member-account. We appreciate the trust you place in us, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering value for your hard-earned dollars.

**Our power supplier lowered rates twice in 2023. ECI REC used the power cost adjustment to pass those decreases on to 9,206 member-accounts. This resulted in an average savings of \$86/residential member-account.**

## Investing in our future

Looking ahead to 2024, we will continue implementing strategic investments to further strengthen your Cooperative. A significant portion of our budget will be allocated toward plant upgrades, ensuring that our infrastructure remains resilient and capable of meeting the

evolving energy needs of our membership. This includes rebuilding over 31 miles of overhead distribution lines, as well as investing \$3.9 million in Work Plan projects (see 2024 Construction Work Plan budget).

Additionally, your Cooperative continues to invest in upgrades and new technologies. Initiatives for 2024 include a wireless network upgrade, as well as phone system and digital updates for internal communication.

## Prioritizing maintenance for long-term sustainability

Regular inspections and our vegetation management program proactively address potential issues and extend the lifespan of the Cooperative's distribution assets. In 2023, the Cooperative invested over \$380,000. For 2024, \$360,000 is earmarked for maintenance programs. This commitment to maintenance is essential for preserving reliability and minimizing future service disruptions.

## Investing in our greatest asset: our people

Your Cooperative's strength lies in the dedicated individuals who work tirelessly to keep the lights on for you, the member-consumer. During 2023, we invested over 2,100 hours in employee development. Most of this investment went to our number-one priority: safety! In 2024, we will continue to invest in our workforce through training programs

and professional development opportunities. By nurturing an innovative and dedicated team, we ensure that your Cooperative remains a leader in providing reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity.

In closing, we express our gratitude for your continued support. I also hope my message helps you connect with our 2024 theme: **Energizing Tomorrow: A Resilient Journey of Innovation and Dedication.** Together, we are building a brighter and more resilient future. As we embark on the journey of 2024, rest assured that ECI REC remains committed to serving you with excellence. Thank you for being part of our Cooperative family! 🌱

## 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)

## 2024 CONSTRUCTION WORK PLAN BUDGET

31.1 miles of line replacement	\$1,808,491
Pole, equipment, and conductor replacement	\$899,892
New transformers, meters, and special equipment	\$521,096
SCADA technology	\$184,500
Sectionalizing equipment (e.g., breakers and fuses)	\$177,600
Service upgrades	\$161,285
New services construction	\$143,147
Security lights	\$32,059
Substation investment	\$15,000

## CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

Please email your ad to [classifieds@ecirec.coop](mailto:classifieds@ecirec.coop). Ads for the May/June 2024 *Heartland Link* must be received by April 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. smarhub.coop or download the app.



**Outage Center & Map**  
View current outages via SmartHub or at [outages.ecirec.coop:81](http://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](http://www.iowaonecall.com) or call 811.



**Co-op Connections®**  
Get discounts on everyday expenses. Visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) or download the mobile app.



**Heartland Link E-Newsletter**  
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**Iowa Rural Power**  
Join grassroots advocates for Iowa's electric cooperatives. Visit [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).



CEO TERESA FLOYD

## Message From the CEO: **ENERGIZING TOMORROW**

### A Recap of 2023 and a Look Ahead to 2024

**AS WE USHER IN A NEW YEAR**, let's take a moment to reflect on the successes and milestones of the past year and share our vision for the future. It can be said that 2023 was indeed a remarkable year for your Cooperative, filled with historically low outages, lower power costs than projected, and strategic investments in our infrastructure, maintenance, and employees.

#### Low outages, high reliability

One of the key highlights of 2023 was a record low outage total of 28.2 average minutes per member-account. This number is based on the outages we could control. It does not include planned/scheduled outages or outages caused by the public or power supplier. A big thank-you to our dedicated team of lineworkers and support staff, which responds and restores power as quickly and safely as possible. Our continued investment in plant upgrades, proactive maintenance program, and good weather also played a big part.

#### Fiscal responsibility and transparent budgeting

Financial stability is crucial and remains the bedrock of

*continued on page 11*