

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative



Untangling the Kinks in the Electricity Supply Chain

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Photo credit: Alexia Marsau

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WE PAY YOU TO PULL THE PLUG

REFRIGERATORS (FULL SIZE), \$35 EACH
 FREEZERS, \$25 EACH
 WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS, \$25 EACH

Recycle your old appliances through ECI REC's Pull the Plug partnership with CLEAResult out of Marion, Iowa. Call CLEAResult at 855-838-7817 to schedule your pickup today. Limit three appliances per year, per address.

NOTICE: PROGRAM ENDING 6/30/2023



take the member challenge

1. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: Lead times for ordering _____ jumped from one or two months to as long as two years.
2. ENERGY WISE: Experts are predicting that by _____, many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models.
3. SAFETY: According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, there were 102,000 _____ crashes in 2020.

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Donna D. Lein | Alan Andrews |
| Maria E. Delagardelle | Denise Hilleshiem |
| Steven Francois | Lucille Yedlik |
| Terry J. Bengston | Eldo H. Meyer |
| James B. Loughren | Larry L. Holst |
| Linda L. Walthart | Dick Howe |
| Roger Reuter | David R. Inman |
| Thomas J. Doyle | Larry Thompson |

Calendar Notes

- Sunday, March 12 – Daylight Saving Time
- Sunday, April 2 – Palm Sunday
- Friday, April 7 – Good Friday
- Sunday, April 9 – Easter

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS
 memberservices@ecirec.coop (rebates, product sales)
 csr@ecirec.coop (billing, new customers)

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

(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

Untangling the Kinks in the Electricity Supply Chain

Electric utilities saw warning signs even before the pandemic

a Keeping the Lights On feature courtesy of NRECA's Straight Talk

MANY OF US first heard about supply chain issues two years ago when the COVID-19 pandemic left us looking at empty store shelves.

Shortages also impacted electric utilities, though the industry had been paying attention to supply chains for years. For utilities, the pandemic just amped up the job of keeping the lights on in an industry already adjusting to the rapid rise in renewable energy sources and power lines battered by more severe weather.

According to Stephanie Crawford, the NRECA's regulatory affairs director, electric cooperatives are among those taking steps to manage both immediate and long-term supply chain constraints. Cooperatives began making moves to manage these dynamics before the pandemic even started.

One dynamic that must be dealt with today is that there is only one U.S.-based manufacturer of the kind of steel used to make transformers. These are vital pieces of equipment that help regulate power levels, so electricity is safe to use. That constraint, coupled with a too-small workforce, means that transformer manufacturers have not been able to keep pace with the significant increase in demand coming out of the pandemic. Lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one or two months to as long as two years.

These kinds of delays threatened to slow progress on essential work, like restoring power after a storm or connecting service for new cooperative members. Electric cooperatives also faced delays for meters, conductors, utility poles, bucket trucks—essentially

all the things that are necessary for keeping the system running efficiently.

How did utilities respond? To reduce those backlogs, members of the industry, including electric cooperatives, created a task force last summer that will work with the federal government on resolving supply chain slowdowns.

The Supply Chain Task Force recommended actions the federal government could take to help get utilities what they need. Among its suggestions was providing incentives to encourage domestic manufacturing of steel for transformers. The task force also identified national trends and policies that could conflict with the utility supply chain, including:

- » **Worker shortages and competition for workers** – The task force recommended that the government support incentives for utility-related work.
- » **Renewable energy and infrastructure initiatives** – Electric vehicles, solar energy, and even efforts to expand broadband services can use some of the same materials that are needed by utilities. The task force recommended the government avoid disadvantaging utility work by favoring other projects.

“Electric co-ops are really good at keeping the lights on,” concluded Crawford. “But these supply chain issues have made that job more difficult. Real investment needs to be made in domestic manufacturing and supply capabilities to make sure that all utilities can get the equipment they need. This is critical infrastructure, especially as we rely on the electric grid to power everything from transportation to working at home.” 🌱

The ECI REC Perspective on Supply Chain Issues

by ECI REC Operations Manager Tom Schmitt

JUST AS THE NRECA reports, supply chain issues are causing ECI REC—along with all utilities—to rethink traditional business practices. The logistics and procurement functions of electric utilities are also getting increased attention.

ECI REC is fortunate to have been a member of the not-for-profit wholesale distributor Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) for more than 30 years. RESCO is one of the largest full-line distributors of high-voltage electric products in the Midwest. RESCO is able to serve as an extension of our and other member-utilities' inventory needs. Like other suppliers, RESCO continues to encounter supply chain issues; however, their advanced logistics give them a slight edge in terms of cost-effective inventory and quicker deliveries to their member-utilities.

With or without a wholesale distributor, new strategies will be needed to meet ECI REC's needs. When we could get a transformer in 60 days, we didn't need to project the demand for transformers 5 years in the future. Today, when it's taking more than a year for the equipment to be available, we must look at things through a different lens.

Utilities have been adapting to dramatic changes for years, from weather patterns to the growth of renewable energy. Supply chain management is just one of the latest challenges that we are dedicated to addressing as your trusted Cooperative. 🌱

Winter Storm Elliott and the Risk of Controlled Power Outages

a Keeping the Lights On feature

WINTER STORM ELLIOTT slammed through much of the United States in the days leading up to Christmas. The extremely cold temperatures—fueled by high winds and snow accumulation—created a huge demand for electricity. While demand was at its highest, the extreme conditions temporarily paused some wind and solar generation. Demand for natural gas intensified, causing market prices to skyrocket.

In other words, it was a “perfect storm” for the power grid. On December 23, the need to shed electric load at the distribution level—your Cooperative’s level—nearly became reality. A load shed, also referred to as a rolling blackout or a controlled power outage, is a deliberate but temporary shutdown of power in a part of the distribution system to prevent the failure of the entire system. It’s necessary when demand strains the capacity of the system, as it almost did during Winter Storm Elliott.

Because events unfolded so quickly (and during a holiday), ECI REC likely would not have had time to adequately notify the members who would have been affected had a controlled power outage been necessary. We would’ve had only minutes to reduce the electric load within our distribution system, meaning member notification time would’ve been short to impossible.

So what insight can we draw from Winter Storm Elliott? And what can you do to be prepared in the event of a controlled power outage?

Risk Factors for Controlled Power Outages

As many members know, East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative is an electric distribution system that buys its electricity from Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), which is a generation and transmission system. CIPCO relies on a diverse supply of generation sources and also purchases power from Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). Between what CIPCO generates and purchases, they secure enough electricity for all their members, including ECI REC.

MISO is also the regional authority in a multi-state area that runs down the middle of the United States. It is a nonprofit organization regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). For its territory, MISO

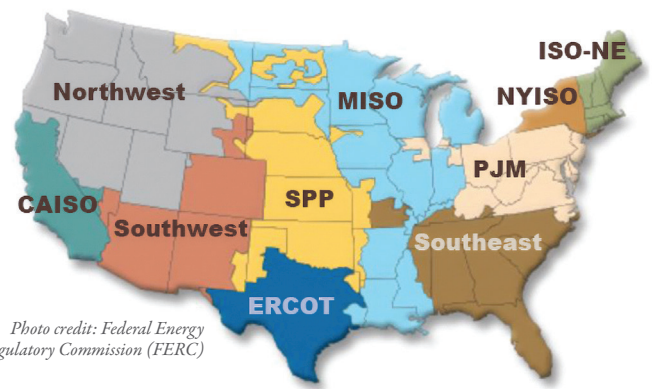


Photo credit: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)


acts like an air traffic controller of the electric grid. Every minute of every day, there must be enough electricity generated to meet the demand for all electric utilities within its footprint. If a shortfall is imminent, MISO will call on CIPCO—and by extension, ECI REC—for temporary load-shedding measures to protect the grid and keep it in balance.

Several factors are at play that could increase the likelihood of controlled power outages. First, the United States is transitioning from dispatchable baseload generation sources like coal-fired and nuclear power plants to intermittent, non-dispatchable resources like wind and solar. Tightening federal regulations have forced utilities to prematurely take baseload generation plants that can generate power on-demand offline, sometimes before replacement generation sources can come online. While ECI REC is not opposed to wind and solar, they are not the same type of power generation; the sun doesn’t shine and the wind doesn’t blow all the time, and intermittent generation doesn’t always align with peak electricity use. Aging transmission lines moving power from one part of the grid to the other also contributes to the problem.

How Can Our Members Be Prepared?

There are many steps your Cooperative will take before implementing a controlled outage for our residential members. The best thing to do is be prepared for an outage no matter the time of year. If you need 24/7 power, consider purchasing a generator. Stock up on batteries, food, warm clothing, medications, and blankets.

You can also voice your concerns to our legislators and express support for all power generation options. Transmission lines need to be constructed and maintained to supply our ever-growing electricity usage. Your Cooperative is already engaged in those conversations with our legislators, making sure they understand the impact these issues have on our members.

ECI REC will do everything we can to prepare for and minimize outage events. Knowing it could happen is the first step we all can take toward being prepared. 

Enter the 2023 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 2023 Youth Tour Essay Contest, sponsored by *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine! To enter, you must submit an official entry form plus 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 www.iowarec.org/youth-tour. You can submit your essay at this website or email it to 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 trips sponsored by local electric cooperatives like ECI REC. The 2023 Youth Tour Essay 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 2022

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.

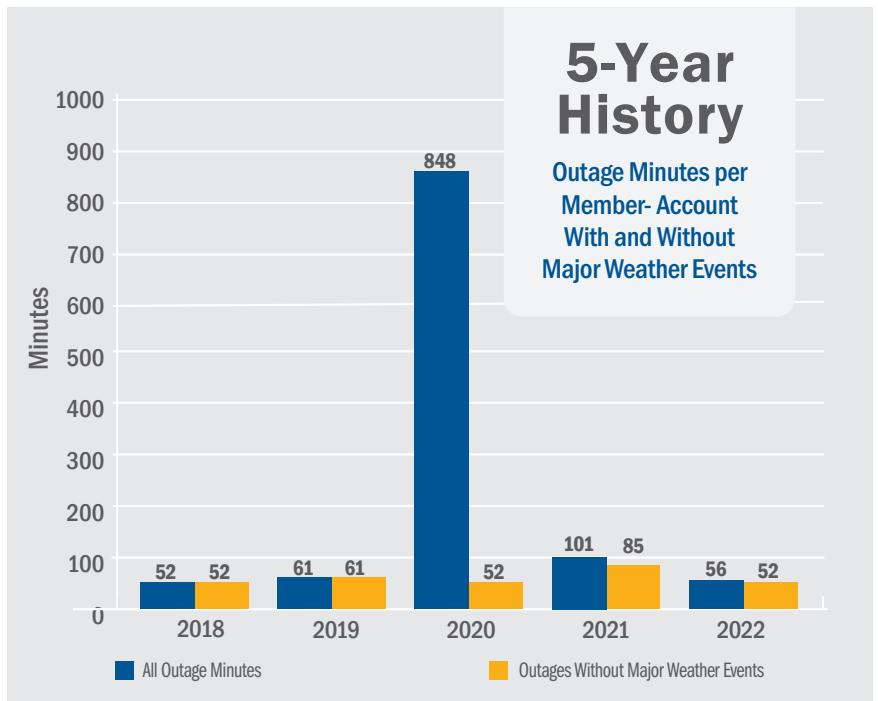
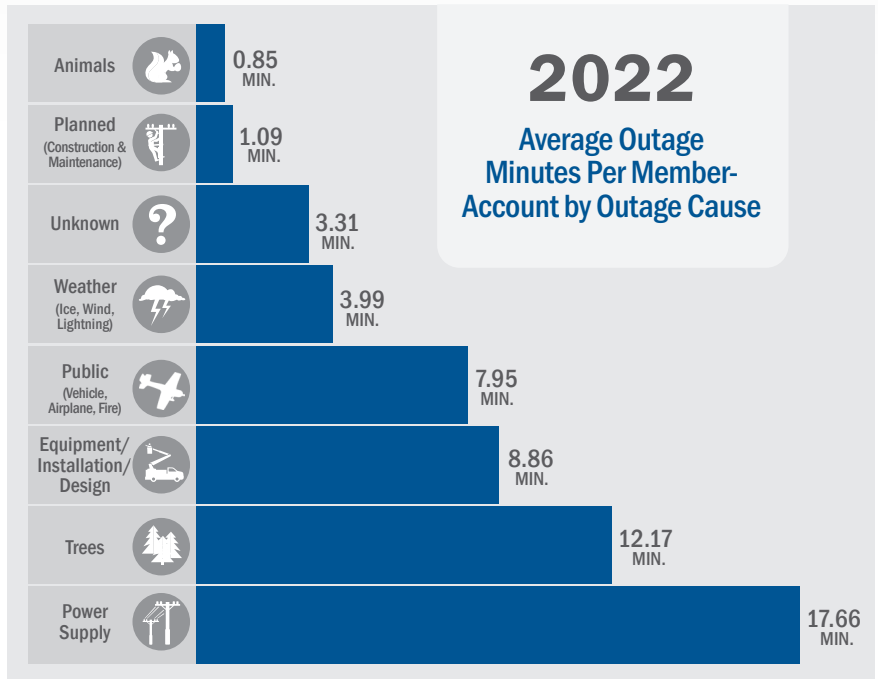
Magazine and IAEC staff will judge all essays anonymously. The decision of the judges will be final. The winner of the contest will be announced on April 4, after all sponsoring local electric cooperatives have chosen their 2023 Youth Tour participants. 🌱

2022 OUTAGE SUMMARY

a Keeping the Lights On update

ECI REC is pleased to report that 2022 was another record year, tallying the third fewest outage minutes per member in the history of East-Central Iowa REC.

The fact that there were no major weather events last year contributed to this success, but our continuing efforts to execute our Construction Work Plan and maintenance program are another very critical reason outage minutes were minimal. In 2022, 37.8 miles of distribution line were replaced; another 42 miles will be replaced in 2023. 🌱





March 21

HAPPY NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY!

Graphic credit: SafeElectricity.org

Celebrate National Ag Day With ECI REC's 2023 Agricultural Rebates

an Energy Wise feature

VENTILATION AND CIRCULATION

- » Ventilation fans (BESS lab rated at .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

LIGHTING: Fixtures must be ENERGY STAR®-qualified and/or on the qualified products list published online at www.designlights.org by the DesignLights Consortium.

HORTICULTURE LED FIXTURES

New construction or replacement:

- » 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 for qualifications and detailed requirements.

COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY 2022 DONATIONS

\$12,000 12 SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOOL FUNCTIONS **\$1,300**

\$13,650 LOCAL OR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH & SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS **\$3,250**

\$3,302 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

IN 2022, ECI REC GAVE **\$33,502** TO **38 CAUSES**

WHY
WE TRIM TREES

The majority of power outages are caused by tree-related issues. It is our job to ensure trees, branches and limbs are a safe distance from power lines to avoid fire hazards and power interruptions.

Safe Electricity.org

If you're adding trees this year, consider your power lines. Scan to access a tree-planting guide on our website.

How Electric Vehicles Impact ECI REC's Grid

an Energy Wise feature courtesy of NRECA's Straight Talk

LAST YEAR SAW a record increase in electric vehicle (EV) sales. Experts are predicting that by 2035, many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models.

A 2021 study by the Department of Energy showed that increased electrification—or the replacement of direct fossil fuel use with electricity—would account for a 38% increase in electricity demand by 2050. EVs will play a major role in this increased electrification.

EV charging presents new challenges in maintaining the electric grid. Fully charging an EV battery requires the same amount of electricity as powering a home during peak energy use times. However, EV charging is a concentrated pull of energy over an extended period, which can add stress to the local power grid by increasing the amount of electricity a utility has to provide. Additionally, the neighborhood transformer needs adequate capacity to handle the increased load. EV charging can shorten the lifespan of transformers by straining and overloading their capacity if they are not matched to a neighborhood's energy needs.


ECI REC is beginning to identify ways to manage this new pattern of electricity use. Analyzing energy load patterns or identifying where and when our grid has spikes in demand can provide us with data on where to place higher-capacity transformers and infrastructure. This analysis can also provide a picture of overall energy use and patterns to help us forecast energy consumption for the future. Planning system



In 2022, there was a record increase in electric vehicle sales. EV charging will contribute to increased electricity demand and present new challenges in maintaining the electric grid. Photo credit: Stan Petersen, Pixabay

maintenance and upgrades is also part of that long-range forecasting.

EV owners can play a role in reducing energy costs and system stress associated with charging. ECI REC's peak hours are typically 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. During these peak times, electricity costs can be much higher. If EV drivers use a timer to schedule charging during non-peak hours—rather than plugging in as soon as they return home from work—the electricity demand could be spread over a longer period to reduce stress on the grid and keep our costs lower. That means lower costs for you in the long run.

EVs are only expected to increase in number. ECI REC and our EV member-owners both have roles to play in accommodating increased demand. **If you own an EV, please contact our Member Service Department at 877-850-4343, so your Cooperative can better plan energy demand for you and your neighbors.** 

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

At least two 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.

Work Zone Awareness Week Sheds Light on Safety

a Safety story

APRIL 17–21 IS National Work Zone Awareness Week! While this is a good time to shine a spotlight, we should all be thinking about keeping ourselves and work crews safe every time we get behind the wheel.

Streets and highways are lined with power poles and electrical equipment, and narrow roadways often require crews like ECI REC's to place equipment in or near traffic lanes. Besides

our crews, you might encounter road workers, other utility crews, tree trimmers, or first responders working in or on the side of the road. Not being alert to these crews can endanger both them and you.

According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, there were 102,000 work zone crashes in 2020. Of those crashes, 774 were fatal and resulted in 857 deaths. (As of the writing of this article, data was not available for 2021.)

So what can you do to help keep roadside crews safe?

- » Drive slowly through work zones. Speeding doesn't just endanger workers on the ground—driving too fast or too close to a work truck can also put an elevated worker in danger by causing their raised bucket to move or sway.
- » Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment, and workers.
- » Be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so allow time for unexpected setbacks.
- » Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- » Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- » Use your headlights at dusk and during inclement weather.
- » Minimize distractions. Avoid activities such as texting, operating a radio, applying makeup, or eating while driving.

Remember to always slow down when approaching a work zone and move over for first responders and work crews. Do your part to help everyone return home safely at the end of the day! 🚗



Severe Weather Week
MARCH 27–31

Using a weather app for alerts? Check out these tips!

- » Have multiple ways to receive warnings. There are many free commercial apps and services for email and text alerts.
- » Know which apps alert for which hazards.
- » Choose the alert methods that work best for you in different situations (at home, at the ballpark, etc.).
- » React quickly when the hazard occurs.

12 WAYS TO PREPARE

<input type="checkbox"/>  Sign up for Alerts and Warnings	<input type="checkbox"/>  Make a Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>  Save for a Rainy Day	<input type="checkbox"/>  Practice Emergency Drills	<input type="checkbox"/>  Test Family Communication Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>  Safeguard Documents
<input type="checkbox"/>  Plan with Neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>  Make Your Home Safer	<input type="checkbox"/>  Know Evacuation Routes	<input type="checkbox"/>  Assemble or Update Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>  Get Involved in Your Community	<input type="checkbox"/>  Document and Insure Property

Source: weather.gov




ECI REC CEO Teresa Floyd, Board Vice President Jeff Elliott, and Director Gary McKenna met with Representative Tom Gerhold (not pictured) and Senator Dawn Driscoll at the 2023 Welcome Back Legislative Reception. Photo credit: LAEC

Electric Cooperatives Advocate for Rural Iowa Priorities as the 2023 Legislative Session Begins

a Looking Out for You feature

ON JANUARY 10, over 100 state legislators joined more than 150 directors, managers, and employees from Iowa's electric cooperatives at the 2023 Welcome Back Legislative Reception in downtown Des Moines. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the annual reception 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 2023 session and discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, we're concerned about secretive industrial and commercial corporations that are seeking to circumvent Iowa's electric service territory laws. These protections exist to provide stability for Iowa homes, farms, and businesses. Iowa's electric cooperatives are also opposed to any legislation that would deny landowners the option to use their property for utility-scale solar generation if they so choose.

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, electric cooperative directors, managers, and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues. Every day, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives provide affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans across the state's 99 counties. 


Members Help Members by Contributing to RECare

a Community Connected article

WITH SUPPORT FROM members like you, ECI REC's RECare program distributes funds to low-income members in Benton and Buchanan Counties. The donations are used to help pay for heating bills or the cost of winterizing the homes of ECI REC members who need assistance.

In 2022, 68 members donated \$7,354 to RECare. Some donated in one payment, while others had the Cooperative add a few dollars to their electric bills each month. No matter the size or frequency of the donation, it made a difference! There are many members who have trouble making ends meet, and we are proud so many of our members are digging into their pockets to help others.

RECare funds are distributed through community action agencies. Donations from our northern service area are administered by Operation Threshold, while donations from our southern service area are administered by Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP).

If you would like to support RECare, visit ecirec.coop. Hover over the Account Services menu, look down the list for Member Programs, and click on the RECare program. 

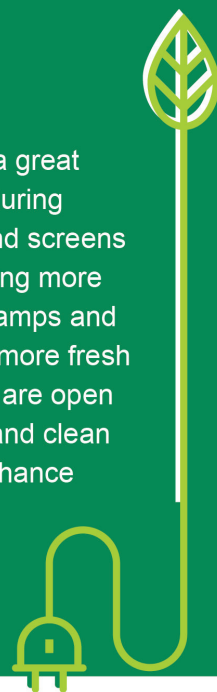


Scan to fill out form online.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: energy.gov



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.

Director Don Shonka Continues Education to Better Serve You

a Cooperative Difference article

WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE that ECI REC Board Director Don Shonka recently earned his Director Gold Renewal Certificate!

Director Gold is an NRECA certificate program geared toward directors who are committed to continuing their education with a tangible credential that reinforces their stature as part of a group of experienced and educated directors.

To maintain their Director Gold Certificates, directors must earn three credits from the NRECA's approved list of continuing education programs (see right) within a two-year period. A maximum of one credit can be earned by attending a conference or non-NRECA program. The remaining two credits must be earned by taking NRECA's Board Leadership Certificate courses.

Congratulations, Don! Thank you for your dedicated service to ECI REC and our membership! 🙌



Board Vice President Jeff Elliot presents Director Don Shonka with a certificate honoring his continuing education achievement. Photo credit: Lisa Franck

NRECA Continuing Education Programs

- » Any NRECA Board Leadership Certificate course
- » NRECA Directors Conference (provides 1 credit)
- » CFC Forum (provides 1 credit)
- » CoBank Energy Directors Conference (provides 1 credit)
- » Mid-America Cooperative Council (MACC) (provides 1 credit)
- » Gettysburg Leadership Program (provides 2 credits)

At ECI REC's holiday celebration, the Board of Directors recognized and thanked ECI REC employees for their years of service. Vice President Jeff Elliott acknowledged all 34 employees. Milestone years-of-service awards were given to 7 of the 34. The Board of Directors thanks the entire ECI REC team for their dedication to serving our members!

Support Iowa's Renewable Energy Production



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

You can volunteer to support the development of renewable energy production facilities in Iowa via your monthly bill. Per month in 2022, an average of 70 ECI REC members contributed an average of \$4.00 each to the program. Member support for the year totaled \$3,557.40.

Message From the CEO

continued from page 12

Why is the PCA necessary? ECI REC's wholesale power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), obtains electricity from many sources, including natural gas, wind, solar, hydro, and coal. CIPCO sets its rates each year based on variables that include the cost of fuels, the cost of power to be purchased in the market, and the amounts needed of each.

If CIPCO's costs are greater than or less than their base rate, they pass on the difference (+/-) to ECI REC and other member-distribution cooperatives via our monthly wholesale power bill. ECI REC in turn can pass on the difference to our member-consumers in the PCA component.

How is ECI REC leveraging the PCA? Your Cooperative has elected to uti-

lize the PCA component rather than include the full 2023 wholesale power cost increase we received from CIPCO in the rate increase that went into effect on March 1. The rate increase—almost \$0.01/kWh—comes after CIPCO was forced to raise wholesale power rates three times in 2022. The primary reasons for these increases were higher market prices for power, increased fuel costs, and higher peak power demands. ECI REC will rely on the PCA to adjust because it allows us more flexibility should wholesale power rates increase or decrease.

Depending on the wholesale power cost fluctuations, we estimate that members can expect to see an average PCA rate of \$0.014/kWh. In the past several years, your PCA has been negative; however, it is highly doubt-

ful that we will see a PCA credit in the future.

How can I calculate my PCA?

Members can calculate their own PCA each month by multiplying the PCA amount (listed on their electric bill) by the kilowatt hours (kWh) used during the billing period. This formula charges all ECI REC members equally for the increase or decrease in the cost of generating electricity, based on fluctuating costs. 📄

YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
(2022/2023 Vice President)

Board District 2 - Julie Kester
(2022/2023 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
(2022/2023 President)

Board District 10 - Ryan Kress
(2022/2023 Secretary/
Treasurer)

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

WANTED: One copy of Judge John Tobin's book, *Impossible Canyon*, published in 1982. Ph: 319-443-2760 (leave a message).

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the May/June 2023 *Heartland Link* must be received by April 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.

POWER COST ADJUSTMENT EXPLAINED

Locally owned cooperative utilities are nonprofit organizations.

When our utility charges members for power, there is no profit collected. The cost of power is passed through from our wholesale power supplier (CIPCO) to our members.



1

The cost to generate or buy electricity fluctuates.

This is due to changing fuel costs, weather, equipment outages, and the demand for electricity.

2

Adjustments are made to reflect the true cost of power each month.

Base rates are collected from members each month, representing our projected revenue requirements. A Power Cost Adjustment charge accommodates monthly fluctuations in power costs.

3

Members' bills show the adjustment ↑ or ↓.

This adjustment is made on the member's bill to reflect any changes from their base charge for that month. This can be a charge some months and a credit other months.

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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



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



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



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



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



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



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



CEO TERESA FLOYD

Message From the CEO: Power Cost Adjustment Increase Explained

EACH MONTH, ECI REC includes a line-item charge on members' electric bills called the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). The PCA reflects an adjustment for the actual cost of wholesale power during each billing period—above or below ECI REC's base rate. The Iowa Utilities Board allows ECI REC (and all other electric utilities) to use the PCA component to offset monthly increases or decreases in the cost of wholesale power.

The PCA is a separate line item on your energy bill. When the PCA factor is negative, your bill amount is reduced, and when the PCA is a positive factor, your bill increases.

Current Service Detail		
Balance Forward		\$0.00
Facility Charge		\$44.00
kWh Charges	2380 kWh @ 0.1022	\$243.24
Power Cost Adj.	2380 kWh @ 0.004	\$9.52
HeatPlus Facility Charge		\$10.00
HeatPlus kWh Charges	1040 kWh @ 0.0500	\$52.00
HeatPlus kWh Charges	1060 kWh @ 0.0500	\$53.00
County Tax		\$4.12
Total Electric Charges		\$415.88
Total Amount Due 05/01/2023		\$415.88
\$6.24 (1.5%) late charge applies after 05/01/2023		\$422.12