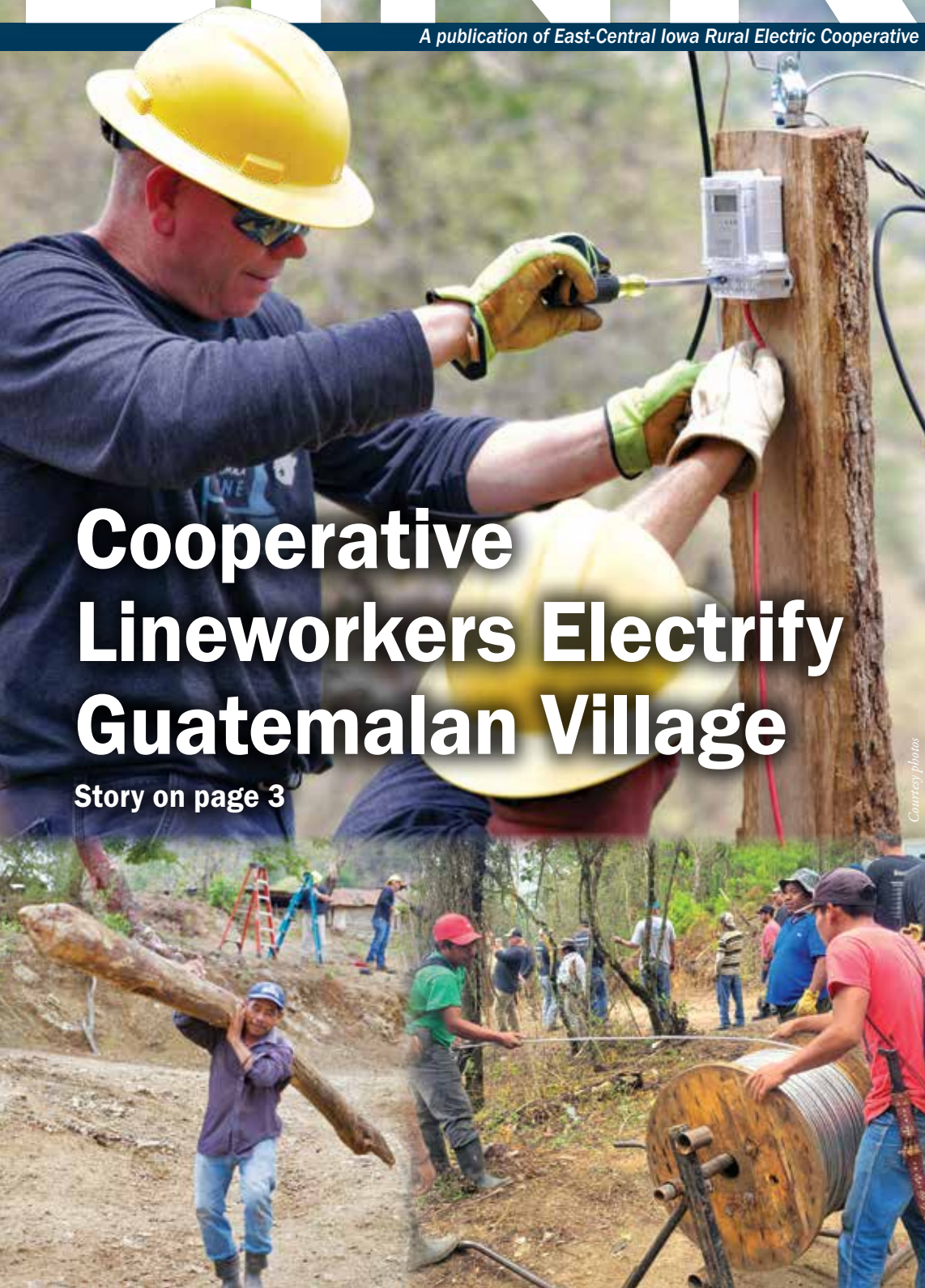


heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative



Cooperative Lineworkers Electrify Guatemalan Village

Story on page 3

Courtesy photos

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

page 4

Two ways to advocate.

FUN AT THE FAIRS

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Connecting with you at the Benton and Buchanan County Fairs.



GIVE TO RE CARE

page 7

Join 54 members who donated last year.

YOUTH TOUR RECAP

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Two students return from Washington, D.C., trip.



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Get Your Newsletter in Your Inbox

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



Scan to email Lisa.



take the member challenge

1. **COMMUNITY CONNECTED:** The lineworkers who volunteered are used to working hard in _____ conditions, but this trip pushed them to new limits.
2. **LOOKING OUT FOR YOU:** With nearly 35,000 donors who contribute, this ___ supports political candidates who support issues important to electric co-ops.
3. **ENERGY WISE:** _____ users are experiencing a more user-friendly interface in 2024!

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

challenge winners last issue's

The following names were drawn from the July/August 2024 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

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

Calendar Notes

October is Co-op Month!

CLOSED: Monday, Nov. 11 to honor Veterans Day

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS

memberservices@ecirec.coop
(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop
(billing, new customers)

WEBSITE

www.ecirec.coop

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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.



Left: Volunteer lineworkers from Iowa and Minnesota electric cooperatives near Las Peñas. Right: ECI REC's Brian Reidy is joined by kids living in the village. Front cover, lower left: A local worker carries a 15-foot makeshift utility pole nearly 500 feet. The pole, made from a dead tree, was used for the meter pole. Front cover, lower right: Local workers help turn and carry the line two miles through deep ravines and up the side of the mountains.

Cooperative Lineworkers Electrify Guatemalan Village

a Community Connected feature

IN MID-JUNE, 14 lineworkers from Minnesota and Iowa traveled approximately 2,800 miles to transform a rural village in Guatemala, improving lives for generations to come. The trip was part of NRECA International, which has been sending volunteers to illuminate villages and homes in impoverished countries around the world since 1962.

ECI REC was pleased to send Line Foreman Brian Reidy to the village of Las Peñas for two weeks to help with this life-changing work. Situated in eastern Guatemala, the village sits at an elevation of approximately 6,000 feet and is made up of about 35 homes scattered on the crests and flat areas of the mountainside. Crews helped build more than three miles of power lines and wired homes for electric service.

A Las Peñas resident carried this empty spool nearly half a mile. It's destination? Her kitchen, to use as a table.



The lineworkers who volunteered are used to working hard in challenging conditions, but this trip pushed them to new limits.

“The drive to the village was rough, and the overall terrain was pretty challenging. However, the guys were great and the locals were very helpful,” said Brian. “For 14 guys from all different co-ops to work together smoothly through it all, it was pretty amazing to be honest.”

All the work had to be done by hand without bucket trucks and other large equipment that's available in the States. However, local residents were eager to help. Crews were amazed at how they completed work that would be done by equipment back home, such as running line down one side of the mountain and back up the other.

The local municipality will now manage the lines and serve the village. The introduction of electricity will bring meaningful change to the community. In rural villages, boys often attend school while girls are kept at home to do housework and prepare food. With electricity, girls can join the boys at school. Additionally, electricity brings numerous other benefits, including better health, fewer open fires in kitchens, food refrigeration, economic growth, and more.

On the last day, the crews met the locals outside the village for a small ceremony. The leader of the village spoke on behalf of the community, expressing their gratitude to the team. “Thank you to everyone who helped,” he said. “You bring happiness for the hope that we can do more now with electricity.” 🌱

Two Ways to Make Rural Voices Heard

a Looking Out For You feature

You can contribute to conversations about energy policies that impact co-op services and the communities we call home.

America's Electric Cooperatives is the



America's Electric Cooperatives | PAC

non-partisan political action committee (PAC) of the NRECA. With nearly 35,000 donors who contribute, this PAC supports political candidates who support issues important to electric co-ops.

America's Electric Cooperatives PAC allows electric co-ops to financially support federal candidates through personal dollars raised from co-op leaders and member-consumers. Your PAC contribution builds on our collective strength, which is grounded in the relationships between local electric co-ops, the communities they serve, and the candidates seeking to represent them.

For just a small amount a month, you can be sure your voice is heard in Washington, D.C. For more information on how to join, simply visit cooperative.com/pacdonation or complete and return the form below.



The PAC is just one tool in the NRECA's advocacy toolbox.

Voices of Power is a grassroots net-

work of cooperative members who are giving input on energy policy decisions that impact co-ops and, by extension, our way of life. These advocates are also sharing about the ways cooperatives support communities and the value of the cooperative business model.

VCP's main issue priorities include:

- » Access to reliable, affordable, responsible power
- » Support for co-op communities
- » Implementation of futuristic solutions for rural communities
- » Environmental stewardship

Visit voicesforcooperativepower.com to sign up to get regular updates with information on how to contact Congress and federal agencies, share your story about how energy policies impact you, and find links to connect with VCP on social media.

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

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

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

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Date: _____

Account No.: _____ Signature: _____

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

Meet ECI REC's 2024 Shine the Light Contest Nominees

a Community Connected feature

FOR A FOURTH YEAR, the IAEC's Shine the Light contest has returned to celebrate local volunteers! Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community. There were 75 nominations, the second-highest number in the history of the contest. This year's entries came from 24 electric cooperatives and two municipal utilities served by Central Iowa Power Cooperative.

Three winners will be awarded a \$3,000 donation to the charity or community organization of their choice. ECI REC would like to take a moment to celebrate two nominees from our service territory:

- » **Michael Kramer** of Vinton was nominated by Becky Van Wey for his work with Vinton-Shellsburg United Special Olympics.
- » **Yvette Vogel** of Jesup was nominated by Monica Bengston for her work with the Jesup Community Blood Drive.

You can learn more about the contest at IowaShineTheLight.com.

Photo credit: Touchstone Energy



Members Save With ECI REC Weatherization Incentives

an Energy Wise reminder

Requirements (with or without LIHEAP)

- » 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).

Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

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

Maximum rebate per home: \$2,200

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

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

Maximum rebate per home: \$300

LIHEAP QUALIFIED

(See LIHEAP weatherization income guidelines to the right)

Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

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

Maximum rebate per home: \$2,800

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

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

Maximum rebate per home: \$300

State Releases 2024–2025 LIHEAP Requirements

an Energy Wise update

THE 2024–2025 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply, dial 211 or visit hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/LIHEAP to contact your local community action agency.

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

HOW TO APPLY FOR LIHEAP

WHEN TO APPLY

- » Elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled: October 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025
- » All other households: November 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025

WHAT TO PROVIDE

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

WAGE EARNERS

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

FIXED INCOME

This income may include: Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income, veteran's assistance, unemployment insurance, and pensions. Please provide copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS

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

Note: Additional countable income and/or income verification not listed above may be required for eligibility determination.

INCOME MAXIMUMS

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$30,120
2	\$40,880
3	\$51,640
4	\$62,400
5	\$73,160
6	\$83,920
7	\$94,680
8	\$105,440

For households with more than eight members, add \$10,760 for each additional member.

Revolving Loan Fund Supports Local Economy

a *Community Connected* reminder

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: Scott VanOsdal, StraightTalk



Cooperative Fun at the County Fair

a *Community Connected* recap

Photo credit: Lisa Franck

ECI REC HAD A GREAT TIME at the Benton and Buchanan County Fairs this summer! We contributed \$1,026 to the county Cattle-men’s Associations, Pork Producers, and Dairy Producers through vouchers for pork and beef burgers and ice cream cones. We also passed out 200 swag bags, 45 swag bag cards, and 196 toy hard hats.

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



Photo credit: Teresa Floyd

Bill Credit Winners

- » MJ Elwick, Vinton
- » Chad Newton, Vinton
- » Elizabeth Anderson, Vinton
- » Paul Grovert, Shellsburg
- » Steve Smith, Center Point
- » Amanda Sherman, Rowley
- » Rod Fletchall, Independence
- » Jolt Systems, Urbana
- » Robert Muchmore, Rowley
- » Andy Osborn, Winthrop

Thanks to Our Summer Help!

a *Keeping the Lights On* spotlight

AS PART OF ECI REC’S commitment to our community, we hire individuals who are interested in the power line construction industry as summer help.

“This arrangement gives our crews additional help during the busy summer months,” said Operations Manager Tom Schmitt. “And the students have the opportunity to gain valuable experience before leaving for school.”



Zach Staab

Zach Staab graduated from Vinton-Shellsburg High School in 2024 and worked out of the Vinton Operations Center from May 23 until August 8.


Zach is currently on the waiting list for the Powerline Technology program at Northwest Iowa Community College. ECI REC is always glad to hire summer helpers who are looking to pursue a career in electrical line work, and we wish all the best to Zach! 📞

RECare Supports Members in Need

a Community Connected article

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

ECI REC would like to thank all the members who are giving to others in our communities. Even a small amount can help those less fortunate. From July 2023 to June 2024, 54 members contributed to RECare through monthly contributions and 8 contributed via one-time donations. In total, these members contributed \$6,813. Those donations assisted 22 members in need, with an average assistance of \$444.10 going to each household.

Help ECI REC reach our goal of exceeding that number of participants in 2024–2025! To sign up for RECare or make a one-time donation, call 877-850-4343 or return the form found at ecirec.coop (under Account Services, Member Programs, RECare Program). 



Scan to fill out form online.


Choose the Heat Plus Rate for Winter Savings

an Energy Wise update

FROM OCTOBER 1 TO MAY 31, ECI REC offers a special Heat Plus rate that can save qualifying members up to 50% on winter heating bills.

The current rate is \$0.05/kWh. To qualify for the Heat Plus rate, your heating system must:

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

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

We're Conducting an Energy Use Survey!

a Cooperative Difference notice

Please be aware that East-Central Iowa REC—in conjunction with our power supplier (CIPCO)—will be conducting a survey this fall, maybe as early September.

We will mail surveys to a small random sample of our residential members. The questions will cover members' homes, appliances, energy efficiency measures, and opinions about energy use and related topics. If you receive a survey, we ask that you take 10 minutes to complete it and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided; you may also complete it online at the web address found on the questionnaire. We appreciate your help!

AMAZING SAVINGS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Visit the new **Connections.coop** member benefits site and download the free app to unlock a world of savings.



VISIT WWW.CONNECTIONS.COOP FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Leslie Kaufman Named Executive Vice President of Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

*a Cooperative Difference
announcement*

THE BOARD of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) has hired Leslie Kaufman of Topeka, Kansas, as the association's next executive vice president and general manager.

"Leslie is a visionary leader and seasoned executive," said IAEC Board President Kenny VandenBerg. "She brings a unique combination of skills and experience to lead the association into a new era."

Kaufman's extensive cooperative experience will be invaluable in this new role. She began working for Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) in 2017, most recently serving as the vice president of government relations and legal counsel. 🌱

WANTED: Rural Iowa high school students who have a passion for leadership

Attend our webinar series
in October for a chance
to win Apple AirPods
and a \$1,000 college
scholarship! Learn more
at IowaYouthTour.com



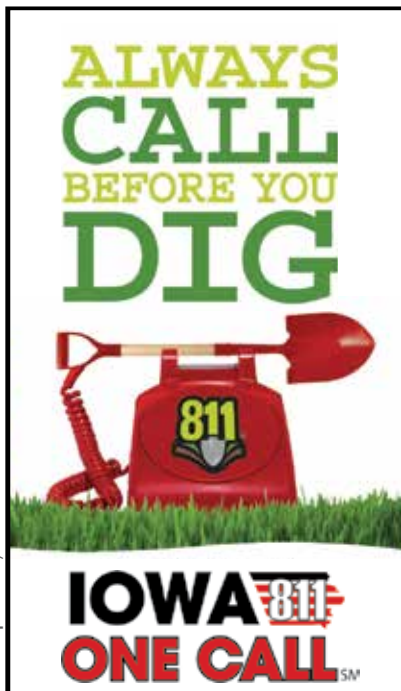
2024 Iowa Youth Leadership Academy

a Community Connected story

GUIDED BY OUR COOPERATIVE COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY, Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric co-op career opportunities, and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series on October 1, 17, and 24.

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45–60 minutes and focus on a specific topic: the cooperative business model, rural Iowa advocacy, and civic involvement and leadership.

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



BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

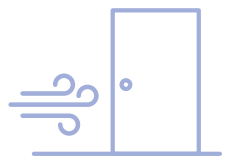


MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



Local Teens Return From Trip of a Lifetime to Washington, D.C.

a Community Connected story

CARLEE NOE OF ROWLEY AND LEADAH PRICE OF ARLINGTON

recently participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Sponsored by East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, they traveled to Washington, D.C., in mid-June with 35 other student leaders from Iowa.


Every summer, this weeklong leadership development program provides high school students with opportunities to learn about government, the electric cooperative business model, and pressing issues in the energy industry. Students meet their elected legislators, tour historic sites, and run their very own snack cooperative.

For over 65 years, the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of locally owned electric cooperatives like East-Central Iowa REC, statewide trade associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

“These students gain a firsthand understanding of the legislative process and make connections with other student leaders from across the country that will last a lifetime. We look forward to continuing the Youth Tour tradition for years to come,” said Teresa Floyd, Chief Executive

Officer of ECI REC. “The Youth Tour truly is a trip of lifetime, and ECI REC was proud to send these two young women to the nation’s capital.”

In addition to taking in the sights of D.C., all the state groups convened for the Rural Electric Youth Day, sponsored by the NRECA, to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year’s Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion. Schlappi shared his inspiring message for every American, young or old: “Just because you can’t stand up doesn’t mean you can’t stand out.”

Since 1958, Iowa’s electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students on the Youth Tour. For more information, visit the Youth Tour page at ecirec.coop or IowaYouthTour.com. You can also search for “Iowa Youth Tour” on Facebook or Instagram to see the group’s recent adventures. 



Courtesy photo

From Carlee and Leah

“Thank you so much for choosing me for Iowa Youth Tour. I’m having so much fun and meeting so many new people. By the time I come back, I will have become a new person. This trip has changed me for the better. My leadership has improved drastically.”

Carlee Noe

“Thank you so much for sending me to D.C. I have LOVED the trip so far, and I am excited for what’s to come. Before coming to D.C., I didn’t understand the importance of honoring veterans, but after seeing Arlington Cemetery and the Vietnam and Korean War Memorials, I understand it now and I fully understand the importance of patriotism. That’s something that will follow me for the rest of my life.”

Leah Price



Courtesy photo



NEWLY REDESIGNED SMARTHUB

Save time and money by managing your account at anytime from anywhere.



SMARTHUB Is Simpler to Use!

an Energy Wise update

SmartHub users are experiencing a more user-friendly interface in 2024!

- ✓ The technological foundation did not change—the platform features the same bill payment tools.
- ✓ A simplified menu structure makes it easier to navigate SmartHub and connect directly with ECI REC.
- ✓ Usage and payment details are also front and center for fast, easy access!

Visit ecirec.smarthub.coop for more information!

Budget Billing Levels Monthly Payments for Members


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

How is your monthly payment calculated?

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

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

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

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

YES, tell me my monthly budget amount.

Name: _____

ECI REC Account No.(s):

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS

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

Local phone: 319-443-4343

Toll free: 877-850-4343

Fax: 319-443-4359

Email: ecirec@ecirec.coop

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

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

Toll free: 877-565-4450

Fax: 515-725-7398

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

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

5 Tips for a Safe Harvest

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

1. Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators, and other tall machinery.
2. Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
3. Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
4. Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
5. Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.

Message From the CEO

continued from page 12

to equipment, substations, hazard recognition, and documentation. The assessment also includes field observations.

Infrastructure inspections like this ensure that it is safe for ECI REC members and the communities we serve. Our unannounced RESAP assessment was conducted by safety professionals from the IAEC in June. They inspected the facilities and equipment at our operating centers in Independence and Vinton, as well as the Urbana headquarters building; they also observed line crews working in the field.

The goal is not to catch employees doing something wrong, but to observe them in their normal setting to analyze our safety practices. A fresh set of eyes from an outside source can provide valuable input.

A highlight of the assessment was that ECI REC had zero employee lost

time or vehicle accidents for five consecutive years (2019–2023). The over 200-point checklist included in the RESAP assessment revealed that we have no areas of critical concern, receiving exceeding expectations or satisfactory scores.

Safety is a cornerstone of your Cooperative's operations and requires commitment at all levels. It's not just about ensuring compliance with regulations, but also fostering a culture that prioritizes the well-being of employees and the community. Investments in safety measures can indeed involve significant financial resources, but they are crucial for preventing incidents, minimizing risks, and maintaining a positive reputation. Your Board of Directors plays a critical role in endorsing these investments, because at the end of the day, we want everyone to work safely so they can go home to their families. 🍁

YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
2024/2025 Vice President

Board District 2 - Julie Kester
2024/2025 Secretary/Treasurer

Board District 3 - Brian McNulty

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna

Board District 6 - Pete Burmeister
2024/2025 Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

Board District 9 - Steve Rau
2024/2025 President

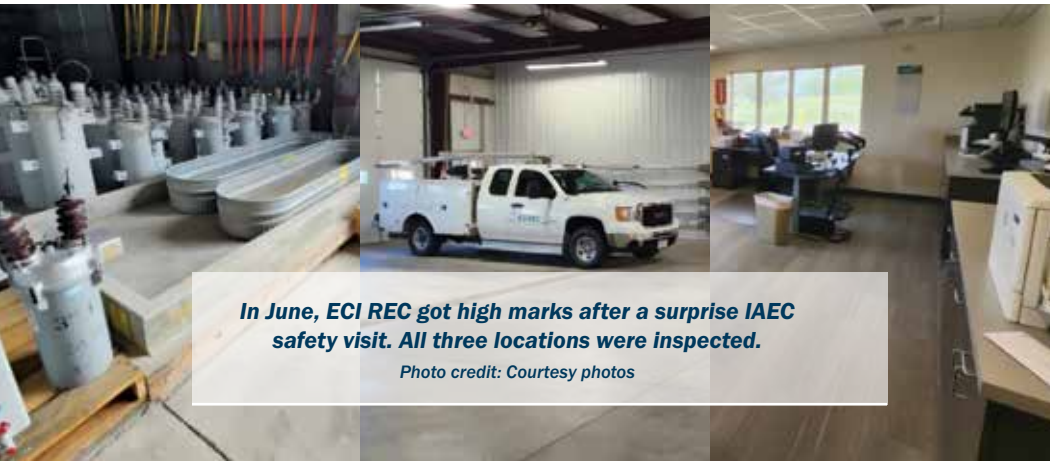
Board District 10 - Gary Cook

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: White Windsor Wellington 3.0 men's bike, 24-speed, never used, \$150.00; 18" Snow Joe electric snowblower, used once, \$100.00. Near Walker. Leave voicemail. Ph: 319-721-2829.

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



In June, ECI REC got high marks after a surprise IAEC safety visit. All three locations were inspected.

Photo credit: Courtesy photos

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

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

Phone: 319-443-4343

Ownership: East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Publisher: Teresa Floyd

Editor: Lisa Franck

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

CLIP AND MAIL

See page 2 for the Member Challenge questions.

Answers: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

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

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CEO TERESA FLOYD

Message From the CEO: What Is the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program?

ECI REC passes unannounced assessment with flying colors

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING a safety culture is a continuous process that relies on the daily attitudes and actions of our employees. Like muscle memory, safety becomes second nature when it's consistently practiced. One of the ways your Cooperative gauges the effectiveness of our safety culture is by participating in the NRECA's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP).

The goal of RESAP is to create a culture of safety through collaboration between representatives and safety professionals from statewide associations, distribution and G&T cooperatives, and the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange. RESAP aims to elevate a cooperative's safety program by facilitating on-site observations by industry professionals and peers every three years. Additionally, cooperatives are required to submit annual safety improvement plans and self-assessments.

Unannounced assessments involve evaluating everything from housekeeping and the security of facilities