

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Local Teen Takes in All D.C. Has to Offer on Youth Tour

Story on page 3



Photo credit: Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

page 4

Scholarship and prize chances for online attendees.

LOANS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY & BUSINESS

page 5

Take advantage of the Revolving Loan Fund.



MAKE RURAL VOICES HEARD

page 8

PAC and grassroots network.

SUMMER STORM DAMAGES

page 9

Stay safe around downed lines and poles.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

IN THIS ISSUE

- 04 YOUTH LEADERSHIP
- 04 CYBERSECURITY TIPS
- 05 CO-OP MONTH
- 05 LOANS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY & BUSINESS
- 05 FALL INTO SAVINGS
- 06 RECARE REPORT
- 06 HEAT PLUS RATE
- 06 THE IMPACT OF IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
- 07 SMART HUB AUTO PAYMENT
- 07 BUDGET BILLING FORM
- 07 QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS
- 08 MAKE RURAL VOICES HEARD
- 09 SUMMER STORM DAMAGES
- 09 CHEERS, SUMMER HELP!
- 09 NEW SERVICE TECH
- 10 WEATHERIZATION INCENTIVES
- 10 LIHEAP PROGRAM

IN EACH ISSUE

- 07 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH
- 08 THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY
- 08 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS
- 11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- 12 MESSAGE FROM CEO TERESA FLOYD



heartland link email delivery

Prefer less mail to sort?
We offer email delivery
(PDF format) of the
Heartland Link.



Scan the QR code to email lisa.franck@ecirec.coop.

take the member challenge

1. SAFETY: When it comes to passwords, remember _____ trumps complexity.
2. ENERGY WISE: From October 1 to May 31, ECI REC offers a special _____ rate that can save qualifying members up to 50% on winter heating bills.
3. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: In total, _____ ECI REC member-accounts were affected by weather events in June.

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.

last issue's challenge winners

The following names were drawn from the July/August 2025 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Diane M. Koch	Donovan C. Hiepler
Steven B. Teel	Gary Stearns
Brenda K. Kleitsch	Vivian M. Cronbaugh
Kent D. Anderson	James H. Miller
Jerry Van Daele	Michael J. Silhanek
Glenda Westphal	Roxann L. Schwartz
Alice Billingsley	Loren M. Meredith
Calvin E. Harks	Thomas G. Wiese

Calendar Notes

CLOSED:
Tuesday,
November 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

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Teresa Floyd
Chief Executive Officer
Ext. 450
teresa.floyd@ecirec.coop

Jennifer Schmitz
Manager of Finance
Ext. 427
jennifer.schmitz@ecirec.coop

Tom Schmitt
Operations Manager
Ext. 519
tom.schmitt@ecirec.coop

Adam Albertsen
Manager of Member Service
Ext. 503
adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop

Lisa Franck
Manager of Communications
Ext. 472
lisa.franck@ecirec.coop

Nathan Groom
Information Services Manager
Ext. 410
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.



Above: Youth Tour participants from the state of Iowa. Photos courtesy of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

Local Teen Attends National Youth Tour Program in Washington, D.C.

a Community Connected feature

RANGER REED OF INDEPENDENCE recently participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Sponsored by ECI REC, he traveled to Washington, D.C., in mid-June with 34 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 today's pressing issues in the energy industry. Students meet their elected officials, 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 ECI REC, statewide trade associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Ranger said he had the experience of a lifetime. "The Youth Tour was so amazing. It was really cool to meet our elected officials and learn about politics up close. Plus, I made friends and experienced history firsthand. It really made me think about what it means to be an American and shows that people my age do care about this country."

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for Rural Electric Youth Day, sponsored by the NRECA, to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year's Youth Day agenda



Dear East-Central Iowa REC,

Thank you for sending me on this wonderful trip. I had so much fun. I have learned so much about our government. Thank you again for all you do.

Ranger T. Reed

included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion. Schlappi shares 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 Youth Tour. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperatives. Over 50,000 students have participated in the Youth Tour program since its creation. For more information on how you can participate in ECI REC's 2026 Youth Tour program, contact your Cooperative toll free at 877-850-4343, go to ecirec.coop, or visit IowaYouthTour.com. You can also search for "Iowa Youth Tour" on Facebook or Instagram to see the group's recent adventures. 📱



Students, Are You Ready to Serve as a Community Leader?

a Community Connected feature

Calling all high schoolers: Attend our leadership development Zoom sessions in October for a chance to win a \$1,000 college scholarship and AirPods! Scan the QR code to register.



IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES are thrilled to offer another opportunity to experience the **Iowa Youth Leadership Academy's** three-part webinar series on October 2, 14, and 23. During this year's video series, dynamic speakers will teach students leadership skills, advocacy, the cooperative business model, and electric cooperative career opportunities.

Once registered online, students can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45–60 minutes and will focus on a specific topic: the cooperative business model, advocacy, 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 September 30 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail. 📦

OCTOBER IS CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH.

4 Cybersecurity Tips for a Safer Digital World

a Safety feature



DID YOU KNOW the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That covers a wide range of electronics, including smartphones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants, and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, new cyber threats are an ever-present worry.

ECI REC is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other cooperatives to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too! When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts, and sensitive data.

Learn to spot and report phishing attempts. Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages, or other types of digital communications to lure you to click a bad link

or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar, or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it and block the sender! If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.

Create strong, unique passwords. When it comes to passwords, remember length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.

Enable multifactor authentication when available. Multifactor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.

Update software regularly. The software on internet-connected devices—including personal computers, smartphones, and tablets—should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all! Visit **staysafeonline.org** for additional cybersecurity tips. 📧

NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Electric cooperatives
provide power
with purpose.

Co-op Month is the perfect time to celebrate all the ways co-ops are unique. But more importantly, this is a time to celebrate our members—the driving force behind everything we do. You are the reason ECI REC provides power with purpose!



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, nonprofit 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: Cooperative.com

Fall Into Savings With Co-op Connections®!

Save big and enjoy more with your Co-op Connections Card! Online and in-store savings are available from local and national retailers.

Download the mobile app to use your card via your smartphone!

Android



Apple

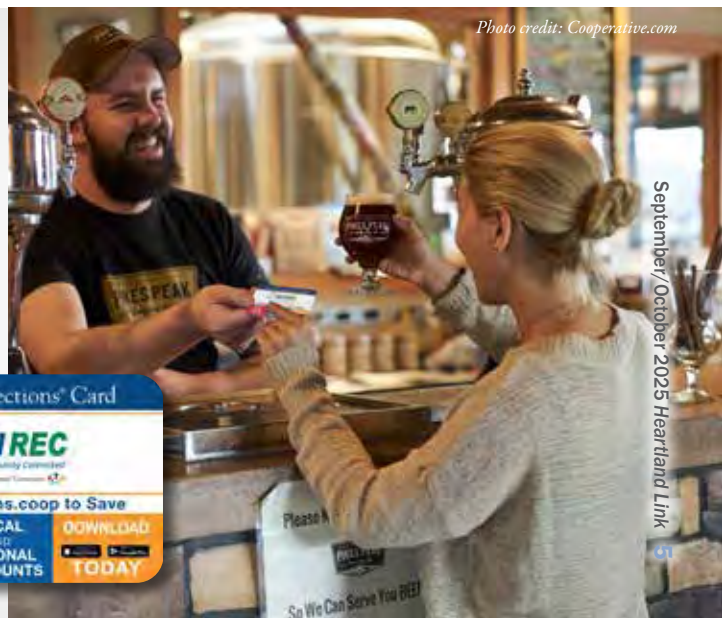


Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances
Fabulous Fridays
Heartland Acres Agribition Center
Cameron Clothing Company
Michael & Dowd
Styles Unlimited

Berry's Lanes, Inc.
In the Country Garden & Gifts
Frazier Nursery
Henkle Creek Mercantile
Subway (Vinton)
Viking Sewing Center



Photo credit: Cooperative.com





**CARE with
RECare**

RECare distributes funds to low-income energy consumers in Benton and Buchanan Counties via community action agencies to help pay heating bills or weatherization costs.

Participation Report Contributions from July 2024 to June 2025



Scan to fill out form online.

Help ECI REC reach our goal of exceeding this number of participants in 2025–2026! 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).

Choose the Heat Plus Rate for Winter Savings

an Energy Wise reminder

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).

Heat Plus is primarily a residential option, but your business may qualify. Call 877-850-4343 for more information!

Photo credit: Cooperative.com, Mark Gilliland

Powering Lives, Empowering Communities

The impact of Iowa's electric cooperatives

IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES serve primarily rural areas with sparse populations, meaning we literally cover more ground than other types of utilities. The realities of these numbers mean that Iowa's electric co-ops must maintain more infrastructure with significantly less revenue per mile compared to other electric utilities.

To accomplish this task, co-ops structure rates and fees to recover costs and partner with other cooperatives and organizations to create efficiencies of scale for supplies, insurance, financing, technology solutions, and more. For example, many of Iowa's electric cooperatives provide employee benefits through the Hawkeye Insurance Association and a healthcare plan managed by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Source: Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives



MUNICIPALITIES

58

Average meters served per one mile of line.

\$131,000

Revenue generated per one mile of line.



Percentage of Iowans served.



ELECTRIC CO-OPS

4

Average meters served per one mile of line.

\$10,800

Revenue generated per one mile of line.



Percentage of Iowans served.



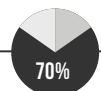
INVESTOR-OWNED

28

Average meters served per one mile of line.

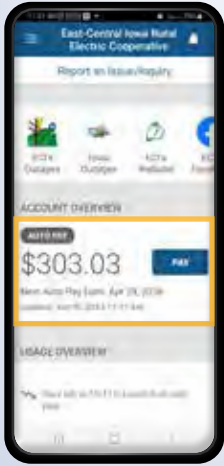
\$85,000

Revenue generated per one mile of line.



Percentage of Iowans served.

WAVE LATE PAYMENTS GOODBYE

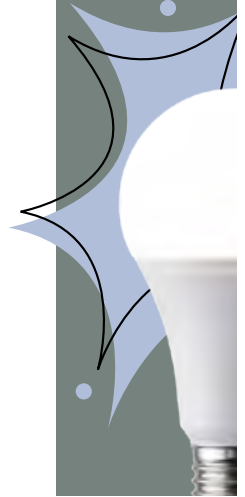


When you set up auto payments on our secure payment portal, SmartHub, you can let account management go into autopilot. Get started today!

- 1** Log into SmartHub on your mobile device or at ecirec.smarthub.coop.
- 2** In the left menu choose, "Bill & Pay," then click "Auto Pay Program." Checking the box by "I accept the Auto Pay Terms & Conditions" will activate the "Enroll" button. Follow prompts to finish.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.



Budget Billing Levels Monthly Payments for Members

an Keeping the Lights On feature

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

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



America's Electric Cooperatives | PAC

is the 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.




Voices for Cooperative Power

The PAC is just one tool in the NRECA's advocacy toolbox. **Voices of Power** is a grassroots network 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: _____

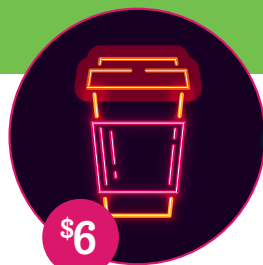
Account No.: _____ Signature: _____

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.

Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. **That's real value.**



Morning To-Go Latte



Fast-Food Combo Lunch



All-Day Power

Thank you for your years of service!



KEVIN WALTON
Line Foreman
30 years

Summer Storms Leave Behind Downed Lines & Damaged Poles

If you see damages, always
call ECI REC to report

a Keeping the Lights On reminder

STORMS IN JUNE AND JULY brought down power lines and poles in ECI REC's service territory—a stark reminder that damaged electrical equipment can be dangerous and even deadly. If you see a downed power line, STAY AWAY and call us immediately. Never assume a line is de-energized. Let trained crews handle it safely.

These photos show the damage caused by winds during a storm that swept through Benton and Buchanan Counties on June 11.

This cluster of storms produced wind gusts over 60 mph. These lines are off our Garrison substation, south of La Porte City. Between 15–20 poles were damaged by this storm.

One month later, the National Weather Service reported an EF1 tornado hit a farm outbuilding three miles east-northeast of Key-stone around 3:20 p.m. It continued through a cornfield, hitting a house, snapping trees, and destroying a garage, with a path 0.7 miles long and 20 yards wide. A second tornado was reported that day four miles west-southwest of Center Point, tracking through rural residences and wooded areas near the Cedar River in eastern Benton and western Linn Counties. A measured non-thunderstorm wind gust of 41 mph was reported five miles north of Koszta. A measured thunderstorm wind gust of 71 mph was reported two miles southwest of Vinton.

In total, 329 ECI REC member-accounts were affected by weather events in June. In July, that number was 615 member-accounts. 🌩️



Photo credit: Kevin Walton, ECI REC



Photo credit: Kevin Walton, ECI REC

Cheers to Brady Holthaus, Summer Help for the Operations Team

a Keeping the Lights on update

THE OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

ECI REC offers hands-on learning opportunities through its summer help program. Working alongside professionals, these workers receive valuable real-world experience in the electrical utility industry and develop field work, system maintenance, and operational support skill sets. This year's hire, Brady Holthaus, is pictured above assisting with terminating the connections in a pad-mount transformer.

Recognize Brady's name? He was one of ECI REC's 2025 scholarship recipients for the Powerline Technology program! Brady worked out of the Vinton operations facility, spending his day-to-day developing practical skills in safety, equipment handling, and cooperative operations, while experiencing the responsibilities of line crews and support staff. ECI REC welcomed Brady on June 23.

A graduate of Center-Point Urbana, Brady has been accepted into the Powerline Technology program at Northwest Iowa Community College this fall! 🌱



Meet Andrew McGuire, ECI REC's New Member Service Technician

a Keeping the Lights On announcement

ECI REC IS EXCITED to welcome Andrew McGuire to our team as a Member Service Technician! Andrew joined our Cooperative on April 25 and brings with him a strong background as a journeyman electrician, along with a passion for community service. When Andrew heard ECI REC had an opening, he saw it as a great opportunity to give back to the community he lives in—and we're glad he did!

In his new role, Andrew will be assisting members with a variety of electrical services and meter installations, as well as interconnection of on-site renewable generation systems. He will also support ECI REC's energy efficiency rebate program and help deliver electrical safety demonstrations throughout our service area.

Andrew, his wife, Crystal, and their daughter, Katelyn, live in Urbana. Outside of work, Andrew enjoys coaching youth sports, drag racing, and spending time with his family.

Please join us in welcoming Andrew to ECI REC! 🌱

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 2025-2026 LIHEAP Requirements

an Energy Wise update

THE 2025-2026 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, 2025, to April 30, 2026
- » All other households: November 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026

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	\$31,300
2	\$42,300
3	\$53,300
4	\$64,300
5	\$75,300
6	\$86,300
7	\$97,300
8	\$108,300
<i>For households with more than eight members, add \$11,000 for each additional member.</i>	



Photo credit: Cooperative.com, Mike Tegarden

Message From the CEO

continued from page 12

Together, we reaffirmed the guiding purpose of ECI REC.

Mission: To demonstrate the advantages of your member-owned Cooperative.

Vision: To make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Based on feedback and analysis, we've set clear priorities for the next two to three years. These strategic goals will focus on system reliability, financial resilience, safety, workforce development, technology innovation, and advocacy—ensuring our Cooperative continues to meet the evolving needs of the communities we power.

You can expect to hear more in the months ahead as we begin to put these plans into action. With your continued support, we remain focused on building a stronger future—together.

Your Cooperative's Strategic Roadmap to Reliability, Safety, and Service

At ECI REC, we know that the strength of our community depends on our ability to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable power today—while preparing for tomorrow. That's why our Board and leadership have developed a focused strategic plan that prioritizes what matters most to our members: fair rates, strong infrastructure, workplace excellence, and a deep commitment to safety.

Here's a look at how we're working for you:



Balancing Growth and Fair Rates: We're aligning major infrastructure upgrades with long-term financial planning, modernizing equity policies, and ensuring our rates reflect actual service costs.



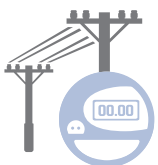
Safety, Always: Safety is at the heart of every operation. We're fostering a transparent, judgment-free culture, sharing regular progress updates, and reinforcing safety through leadership, training, and daily practice.



Supporting Our Team: We're investing in employee training, succession planning, and modern benefits to support a thriving workforce. Special emphasis is being placed on attracting new talent and encouraging growth from within.



Smarter Technology, Stronger Service: From upgrading systems to introducing mobile workforce tools, we're streamlining operations for efficiency and consistency. Our members will also see improvements in service through platforms like SmartHub and expanded self-service options.



Reliable Infrastructure for the Long Haul: We're targeting aging substations and critical upgrades, guided by multi-year construction plans and accurate forecasting. Our goal: maintain the high reliability you expect, without compromising fiscal responsibility.



Advocating for Cooperative Values: We're making your voice heard—engaging with lawmakers, promoting grassroots participation, and investing in Board development tools to ensure our governance is as strong as our service. 🗣️

National Farm Safety and Health Week

Safety First, Avoid the Worst
September 21-27, 2025

Daily Topics

Mon., Sept. 22 - Equipment and Rural Roadway Safety

Tues., Sept. 23 - Health and Wellness

Weds., Sept. 24 - Generations of Farming

Thurs., Sept. 25 - Confined Spaces

Fri., Sept. 26 - ATV/UTV

Learn more at: necasag.org

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YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
2025/2026 Vice President

Board District 2 - Julie Kester
2025/2026 Secretary/Treasurer

Board District 3 - Brian McNulty

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna

Board District 6 - Pete Burmeister
2025/2026 Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

Board District 9 - Steve Rau
2025/2026 President

Board District 10 - Gary Cook

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the November/December 2025 Heartland Link must be received by October 1, 2025.

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.

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.

Find tools for members at www.ecirec.coop



24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub

See account information at ecirec.smarthub.coop or download the app.



Outage Center & Map

View current outages via SmartHub or at outages.ecirec.coop:81.



Online Forms

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Call Before You Dig

Notify utilities before you dig at www.iowaonecall.com or call 811.



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Iowa Rural Power

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



CEO TERESA FLOYD

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO: Looking Ahead: Strategic Planning and Budgeting For A Brighter Future

AS SUMMER WINDS DOWN, ECI REC is already looking ahead to the opportunities—and challenges—the new year may bring. Fall marks the beginning of our annual strategic planning and budgeting process, which is a vital part of how we continue to serve our members with safe, reliable, and affordable service.

At the heart of this work is our Board of Directors, who are entrusted with guiding the Cooperative's direction and ensuring long-term financial stability. Their role includes not just approving budgets but shaping the strategic goals that keep our Cooperative strong, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of our members. We're proud of their dedication and commitment to thoughtful leadership.

In June, ECI REC hosted a Cooperative-wide, three-day strategic planning session led by an experienced industry facilitator. This year's process included sessions with employees, management, and the Board to ensure a well-rounded perspective on where we are—and where we're going.

Strategic planning gives us the chance to reflect on the progress we've made, evaluate our future needs, and align our operations with our mission and vision.

continued on page 11