

heartland LINK



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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a publication of
East-Central Iowa Rural
Electric Cooperative

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Photo credit: Scott Meinecke, IREC

INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE POWER

Reliable power starts with dedicated people. From ongoing training to a strong safety culture, ECI REC continues to invest in the employees who serve our members every day.

In this issue, we invite you to share in our excitement as we celebrate a significant safety achievement: 500,000 hours worked safely. We also pull back the curtain on our hardworking departments at ECI REC, so you can get to know the teams who help keep power flowing to your homes and businesses.

FIND THESE STORIES ON PAGES 3, 4, AND 5.



MESSAGE FROM CEO TERESA FLOYD

Powered by People: Investing in Our Greatest Asset

A Snapshot of the ECI REC Team

31
EMPLOYEES

511
COMBINED YEARS OF SERVICE

16.5
YEARS AVERAGE TENURE

When you flip a switch and the lights come on, it's easy to overlook the people who made that possible. But at the heart of your Cooperative is a dedicated team working every day—often behind the scenes—to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable power.

In this issue of the *Heartland Link*, we're proud to spotlight our greatest asset: our employees. Whenever you see a line truck on the road, speak with a friendly voice on the phone, read our newsletter, or pay your bill each month, there is far more happening behind the scenes than meets the eye. From maintaining our electric system and planning for future needs to supporting members, managing finances, and ensuring safety and reliability, every person plays an important role in serving our community.

Each employee—across every department—contributes to the mission of this Cooperative. Their work, teamwork, and commitment ensure your power is there when you need it, day and night.

A Personal Thank You

The hard work and sacrifices of our employees may not always be visible, but they are never unappreciated. I am proud of our team's professionalism, dedication, and the pride they take in serving our members. On behalf of the ECI REC Board of Directors and leadership team, thank you for allowing us to serve you—and for helping us recognize the people who power our Cooperative. 🌱



Photo credit: ECI REC library

CONNECT WITH ECI REC

Emails
memberservices@ecirec.coop
(rebates)
csr@ecirec.coop
(billing, new customers)

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)

Website
ecirec.coop
Facebook
[facebook.com/
eastcentraliowarec](https://facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec)
(operations news and
general updates)



POWERED BY PEOPLE: 500,000 SAFE HOURS

by Steve Rau, Board President | a Safety feature

Photo credit: Scott Meinecke, REC

The ECI REC team was honored with engraved tumblers commemorating 500,000 hours worked safely. Not pictured: Kevin Walton, Robert Derifield, and Andrew McGuire.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT RELIABILITY at East-Central Iowa REC, we often talk about infrastructure, planning, and investment. But at its core, reliability starts with people—and the culture they create together.

On November 14, 2025, ECI REC reached an important milestone: **500,000 hours worked safely.**

As a member-owned cooperative, safety is not just an operational goal—it is a responsibility we take seriously on behalf of our members, our employees, and the communities we serve. This milestone reflects the commitment our employees bring to their work every single day, often in challenging conditions and behind the scenes.

Reaching 500,000 safe work hours does not happen by chance. It is the result of consistent training, thoughtful planning, open communication, and a culture where employees look out for one another. From tailgate discussions before work begins to ongoing certifications and continuing education, our team is intentional about doing the job the right way.

Safety is also a shared effort. Every department plays a role in maintaining a workplace where speaking up is encouraged, preparation is expected, and taking the time to work safely is always the priority. That mindset protects our employees and helps ensure reliable service for our members.

Investing in safety is one of the most important commitments we can make as a cooperative. It reflects our dedication to our employees and reinforces the trust our members place in ECI REC.

While we are proud to recognize this achievement, we also know safety is not a finish line. It is an ongoing commitment that requires continued focus, training, and care for the people who power East-Central Iowa REC.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank the employees of ECI REC for their professionalism, teamwork, and dedication. This milestone belongs to each of you. 🙌

Safety by the Numbers

500,000 hours
WORKED SAFELY AS OF
NOVEMBER 14, 2025

11 safety meetings
HELD ANNUALLY

7 jobsite observations
CONDUCTED IN 2025

1,500+ hours
OF SAFETY TRAINING COMPLETED

4 Safety Committee
MEETINGS HELD

Photo credit: Katie Stadheim



POWERED BY PEOPLE: THE TEAMS BEHIND YOUR ELECTRICITY

a Keeping the Lights On feature

POWER LINES, TRANSFORMERS, SUBSTATIONS—it's easy to see the equipment that delivers electricity to your home or business. But behind every piece of equipment is a team of people working together to keep your power flowing safely, reliably, and affordably. At East-Central Iowa REC, delivering reliable power is truly a team effort. Every department plays a role, and each role contributes to the service our members count on every day.



Photo credit: ECI REC library



Member Services: The Voice of Your Cooperative

For many members, their first connection to ECI REC is a call to our office. Our Member Services team is designed to be a true one-stop resource!

They are here to help, whether you have a question about your electric bill, need to start or stop service, are interested in energy-saving options or rebates, or aren't sure who to contact with an inquiry. They handle billing and payments, create service orders, provide energy advising, and connect members with the right department when additional support is needed.

This team also includes our Member Services technician, an in-house electrician who provides technical expertise and on-site support when needed. Together, this team works to ensure billing is accurate, requests are handled efficiently, and members receive clear, timely information—making every interaction as smooth as possible.



Photo credit: Kate Stadheim

Operations: Building, Maintaining, and Protecting the System

Our Operations team is responsible for keeping the electric system running safely and efficiently.

Our line crews are in the field, inspecting and maintaining miles of power lines, replacing poles, completing system upgrades, responding to outages, and building new services—all with safety as their top priority. Supporting that work is our in-house Operations team, which manages dispatching, oversees the electric grid, develops Work Plans, supports engineering efforts, and leads safety initiatives across our Cooperative.

This coordination ensures work is planned carefully, resources are used efficiently, and reliability remains strong.

Did You Know?
ECI REC maintains nearly 2,300 miles of line—enough to stretch from Washington, D.C., to Phoenix, AZ.





Photo credit: ECI REC library



Photo credit: Teresa Floyd

Technology:

Supporting a Modern Electric Grid

As the electric system becomes more advanced, technology plays an increasingly important role in reliability and safety.

Our Technology team—including IT and SCADA—maintains the systems that allow us to monitor and manage the electric grid in real time. From supporting internal computer systems and cybersecurity to maintaining communication with substations and system controls, this team helps ensure information flows quickly and accurately when it matters most.

Their work supports faster response times, better decision-making, and a more resilient electric system.

Administrative and Accounting:

Strength Behind the Scenes

Behind every successful cooperative is a strong administrative and financial foundation. Our Administrative and Accounting teams support daily operations by processing payroll, managing employee benefits, paying vendor invoices, maintaining inventory records, and overseeing financial reporting, long-term planning, and regulatory compliance. They also help protect member information, maintain records, and support the communication efforts that keep members informed.

Their work ensures ECI REC operates responsibly, transparently, and with long-term stability in mind.



Photo credit: ECI REC library

Did You Know?
ECI REC employees participate in ongoing training, certifications, and safety meetings to stay current on system technology, safety standards, and emergency response.

By the Numbers

Over 2,100

SERVICE ORDERS CREATED ANNUALLY

Almost 2,300

MILES OF LINE INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED

More than 11,000

CALLS FIELDIED BY MEMBER SERVICES TEAM EACH YEAR

Every role matters when it comes to reliable power.

Powered by People

Every employee—across every department—plays a vital role in delivering the safe, reliable, and affordable power our members expect and deserve. While much of this work happens out of sight, its impact is felt every time you turn on a light. 

Meet Our Team

a Keeping the Lights On spotlight



Photo credit: Travis Schellhorn

Pat Hyland, System Controller

What do you enjoy about your job at ECI REC?

I enjoy helping our members with their electric needs, like outage restoration or assisting with new services for homes, farms, or businesses. I also enjoy seeing all the benefits from the improvements to the distribution system at ECI REC. It is a total team effort from everyone.

What's something members might not realize about your role or the work you do?

It may surprise people how many different duties are involved with my position. This role assists with safety, compliance, scheduling, GIS mapping,

SCADA switching, outage management and restoration, and assisting members with electric needs.

How does your role help support safe, reliable power for our members?

My role supports safe, reliable electricity by working with the Operations team to identify any issues that need to be addressed. This requires great communication from our Operations Centers in Vinton and Independence. When an issue has been identified, whether it's a safety or reliability issue, the entire team comes up with a solution to take care of it. ECI REC has a talented group of people who do a great job of keeping the lights on. 🙌

WHAT DOES A LINEWORKER DO?

On any given day or night, in all kinds of weather conditions, lineworkers install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems.

We entrust our lineworkers with your safety, so they hold a very important job. We also rely on their expertise to power our world.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

Lineworkers must commit to safety above all else for the benefit of those they serve (you!), fellow crew members and themselves. They spend thousands of hours in safety trainings each year and must learn and apply numerous safety regulations.

THEY ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED TO:

- Climb poles to service power lines in areas inaccessible by trucks.
- Stand in an elevated bucket to assess and repair overhead lines.
- Install poles, overhead lines and other equipment.
- Work on both energized and deenergized lines.
- Install and service underground lines.





Doug Appelgate, SCADA Technician

What do you enjoy about your job at ECI REC?

I enjoy the ability to work independently while supporting the larger team. My role allows me to focus on problem-solving and technical work, knowing that what I do behind the scenes helps others do their jobs more effectively.

What's something members might not realize about your role or the work you do?

Members may not realize how many electronic and communication systems are involved in delivering reliable power. My role focuses on keeping those systems—such as substation controls, communications equipment, and monitoring systems—running properly so the electric system can be monitored and managed in real time.

How does your role help support safe, reliable power for our members?

This role supports safe, reliable power by maintaining the systems that monitor and communicate with the electric grid. Keeping these systems running properly allows crews to respond quickly and restore power efficiently when outages occur. 🛠️



Dane Peterson, Engineering Design Technician

What do you enjoy about your job at ECI REC?

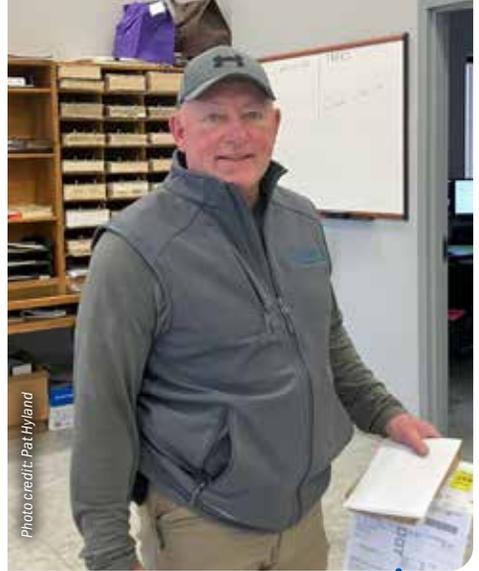
One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is getting out of the office, interacting with new or existing members, and educating them with the information they need to best suit their power needs.

What's something members might not realize about your role or the work you do?

Members might not realize that I and others on our team are a simple phone call away. Someone will always answer the phone (not an operator) and answer their questions to the best of their knowledge or point them in the right direction to get their questions answered.

How does your role help support safe, reliable power for our members?

Not only am I reporting any possible issues on our system and resolving the issues ASAP, but every ECI REC employee is reporting any issues they may have seen on our system. We have always made safety the number one priority for the public and our employees. 🛠️



Mike Adams, Inventory Maintenance Technician

What do you enjoy about your job at ECI REC?

I enjoy the independence of this role and working with the goofballs at my shop.

What's something members might not realize about your role or the work you do?

Members may not realize how much behind-the-scenes work goes into maintaining inventory and equipment. I am responsible for ordering materials, managing inventory, and helping keep vehicles and equipment in good working condition so crews have what they need to do their jobs. I also help keep the shop in pristine condition.

How does your role help support safe, reliable power for our members?

I help support safe, reliable power by ensuring the materials used for line builds and maintenance are up to date, meet code requirements, and are in good condition. Nothing leaves the yard unless it's ready to be used safely, helping crews work efficiently and safely in the field. 🛠️

Investing in Our Future

a Cooperative Difference story

DELIVERING RELIABLE POWER TODAY is important, but planning for tomorrow is just as critical. At East-Central Iowa REC, investing in our future means preparing the next generation of employees, building leadership skills, and creating opportunities for growth within our Cooperative.

This forward-looking approach helps ensure that knowledge is shared, experience is passed on, and ECI REC remains strong for years to come.

Learning Through Experience

One way we invest in the future is through hands-on learning opportunities, such as job shadowing. Recently, students had the opportunity to spend time with our employees to learn more about electric careers, safety practices, and the work that goes into keeping power reliable.

Experiences like these help introduce young people to the cooperative difference and give them a real-world look at the many career paths available within the electric industry.

Developing Leaders From Within

Preparing for the future also means developing leadership at every level. ECI REC supports employee participation in professional development and leadership programs that strengthen skills, encourage collaboration, and reinforce cooperative values.

Employees participate in programs such as leadership development initiatives, safety summits, and field leader training that's designed to prepare them for future responsibilities. One recent example of this investment: In December 2025, Ben Donnelly, a lineworker, completed the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP), helping build leadership capacity across our Cooperative.

Growing Careers at ECI REC

Investing in people also means creating pathways for career growth within our organization.

Travis Schellhorn recently transitioned from a lineworker role into an engineering design technician position—bringing valuable field experience into system planning and design. Internal career moves like this strengthen our Cooperative by combining hands-on knowledge with technical planning, supporting both safety and reliability.

These transitions reflect ECI REC's commitment to recognizing talent, supporting growth, and building a well-rounded team for the future.



Photo credit: Brian Reidy



Photo credit: Erin Campbell, IAEC

Leadership & Professional Development

- ✓ Cooperative leadership programs
- ✓ Management and field leader training
- ✓ Safety summits and continuing education
- ✓ ECI REC employees participated in almost 2,000 hours of training in 2025



Photo credit: Pat Hyland

Looking Ahead

From job shadowing and leadership development to internal career advancement, investing in our future helps ensure ECI REC remains a strong, member-focused cooperative—today and tomorrow. 

A Taste of Tradition

Thank you for sharing your family recipes!

a Community Connected feature

ONE OF THE THINGS WE LOVE MOST about being a cooperative is the sense of connection we share with our members. When we asked you to share your family heirloom recipes, you delivered. We loved reading the stories, memories, and traditions that have been passed down through generations.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to submit a recipe. Each one reflected the care, history, and connection that make family traditions so special.

We are pleased to highlight the following family heirloom recipe submissions in this issue of the *Heartland Link*. As a thank you for sharing their recipe and story, these members received a \$25 bill credit. 

Family Heirloom Recipes

Cajun Potato Soup

Submitted by Kaye Manson, Rowley

I made this one afternoon for supper. Our daughter was here, then our son-in-law came and there wasn't much left. He tasted it and was hooked! It is now their go-to soup. It is one of our favorites on a cold day.

13.5 oz. pkg. Andouille sausage
1 Tbsp. oil
1 cup onion, chopped
½ cup celery, chopped
½ cup red pepper, chopped (optional)
2 tsp. garlic, minced
1 tsp. Cajun seasoning
½ tsp. each of kosher salt, pepper, and paprika
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
4 cups chicken broth
4 large potatoes, diced
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
½ cup heavy cream

Slice up sausage in large pan with 1 tablespoon oil for 3–4 minutes. Set aside. In same pan, add onion, celery, and red pepper. Cook 5–8 minutes, then add garlic and seasonings. Then add broth and potatoes. Simmer until potatoes are tender, then add heavy cream and shredded cheddar cheese. Heat until cheese is melted and heated through.

Chocolate Revel Bars

Submitted by Kaye Dietzenbach, Independence

Chocolate revel bars have been a family staple for over 50 years. The recipe was originally made by my mother, Josephine Goedken. When I got married in 1967, I wrote it down. Over the years, I have shared it with my daughters, Lori Dietzenbach and Sherry Spahn, and my granddaughter, Amelia. In her museum studies class at the University of Iowa, Amelia was asked to create a magazine spread about a favorite family recipe, and of course she chose chocolate revel bars.

1 cup butter or margarine
2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla
2½ cups sifted flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
3 cups quick oatmeal

Cream butter and sugar. Mix in eggs and vanilla. Mix well. Sift together flour, baking soda, and salt, and then add the oatmeal. Mix well (the batter will be stiff). Spread ¾ of the dough into the bottom of a lightly greased 15½ by 10½ jelly roll pan.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Share a
Taste of Tradition

and earn a
\$25 bill credit!



We can't wait to see (and taste!) what you share next!

Do you have a go-to recipe that's perfect for summer cookouts, backyard gatherings, or picnics with family and friends? We're now accepting submissions for our **May/June BBQ & Picnic Recipe Feature**.

We're looking for:

- Grilling favorites
- Picnic side dishes
- Summer desserts
- Family recipes that shine at outdoor gatherings

If your recipe is selected for publication, you'll receive a \$25 bill credit as our thanks.

How to Submit

Please email your recipe to ecirec@ecirec.coop by April 1, 2026.

Be sure to include:

- Your name
- Service address
- Recipe
- A short note about why the recipe is special to you

March Anniversaries



COLTON WOLFE
Lineworker - 8 years



TRENT KOOPMANN
Apprentice
Lineworker - 4 years



ALIZA MOLLENHAUER
Member Service
Representative - 2 years

April Anniversaries



DOUG APPELGATE
SCADA Technician
28 years



NATHAN GROOM
Information Services
Manager - 19 years



ROBERT DERIFIELD
Information Services
Technician - 14 years



JOSH COX
Lineworker - 8 years



ANDREW MCGUIRE
Member Services Technician
1 year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Chocolate Filling

- 12 oz. pkg. of chocolate chips (milk or semi-sweet)
- 15 oz. can of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- 2 tsp. vanilla

Put chocolate chips, condensed milk, butter, and salt into a double boiler and melt. Do not boil. When smooth, add vanilla and nuts (if using). Once melted and well combined, pour the chocolate filling over the dough in the pan and spread evenly. Dot with the remaining dough (do not spread). Bake at 350 for 15 to 20 minutes. Don't overbake. Cool completely before cutting.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

It's Easy! It's Free!

Planning a digging project in your yard or on your property? If you dig without knowing what is located below, you could damage an underground line.

Not only could you become seriously injured, but you will be responsible for the cost of repairs. To avoid hassles and fines, call 811, the Call Before You Dig number, at

least three business days prior to breaking ground. (811 locators do not mark privately owned underground lines or pipes, such as service to outbuildings, sprinkler systems or invisible fences.)

An uneventful digging project is the best kind to have.



Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators

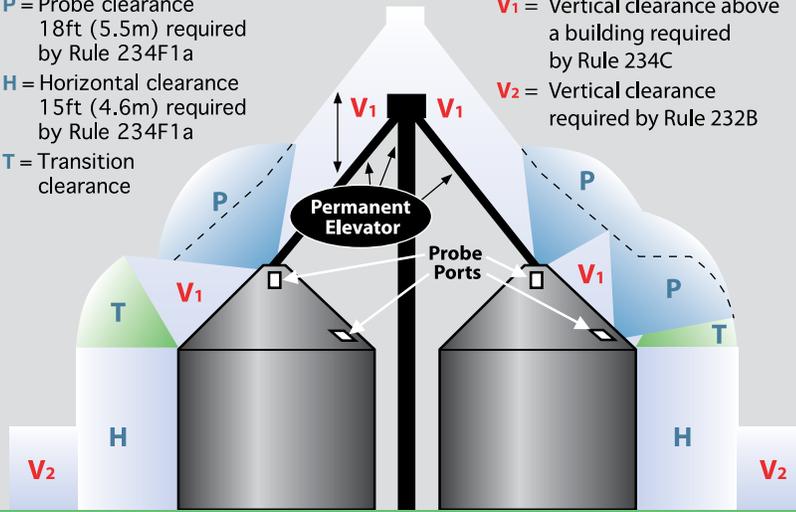
P = Probe clearance
18ft (5.5m) required by Rule 234F1a

H = Horizontal clearance
15ft (4.6m) required by Rule 234F1a

T = Transition clearance

V₁ = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C

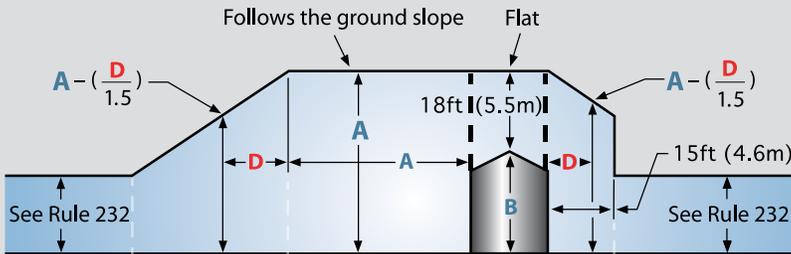
V₂ = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



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Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

ELEVATION



B = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin

H = B + 18ft (5.5m)

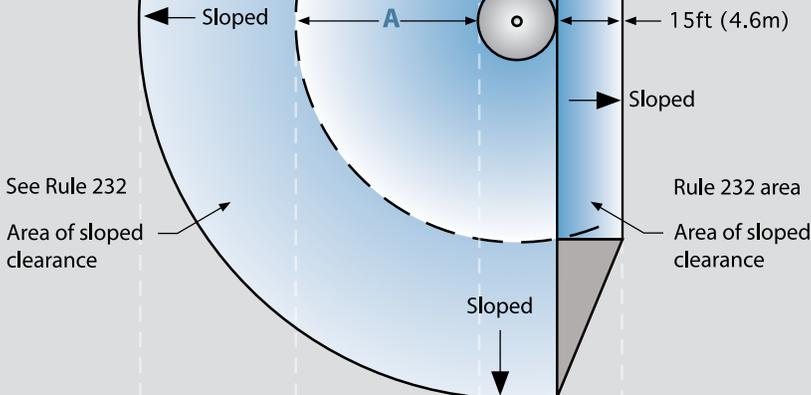
D = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 1ft (300mm) for each additional 1.5ft (450mm) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

PLAN VIEW

LOADING SIDE

NONLOADING SIDE



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Grain Bin Clearance Notice

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of ECI REC's annual public information campaign and are based on the 2023 edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

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

BURNING DITCHES?



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

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

Two Tips For Safer Burning:

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

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

CLIP AND MAIL

See below for Member Challenge questions.

Answers: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Account No. _____ We cannot accept answers by phone.

PERIODICALS

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 on our website or in the SmartHub app.



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®

Get discounts on everyday expenses. Visit www.connections.coop or download the mobile app.



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.

take the member challenge

1. SAFETY: Every department plays a role in maintaining a workplace where _____ is encouraged, preparation is expected, and taking the time to work safely is always the priority.

2. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: Their work supports faster response times, better decision-making, and a more _____ electric system.

3. COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE: Experiences like these help introduce _____ people to the cooperative difference and give them a real-world look at the many career paths available within the electric industry.

Find the answers within the stories, features, and content of this newsletter and you could win a prize. Send your answers to ecirec@ecirec.coop. Or, print the word(s) at the top of the page, cut it out, and send it to: ECIREC, 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. Ten names will be drawn from all correct entries.

last issue's challenge winners

The following names were drawn from the January/February 2026 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mrs. Dick Howe | Edward Sass | Dennis F. Mills |
| Judy R. Hettinger | Wilda M. Ingamells | Billie Jo Tonn |
| Richard A. Griswold | Michael J. Doyle | |
| Steve R. Helms | Joseph B. McIntosh | |