

GET TO KNOW YOUR 2022 DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

BOARD DISTRICT 2

Julie Kester



Julie Kester has been a resident of Benton County for the past 28 years. Julie graduated with an accounting degree from Kirkwood and worked at the Linn County Assessor's office for almost 40 years, 10 of those years serving as the Linn County Assessor. Julie and her husband, Bill, farm north of Urbana and share six daughters and 12 grandchildren.

Julie was first elected to the ECIREC Board of Directors in 2019 and currently serves as the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. Julie has earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate and is working on the Board Leadership Program.

Julie enjoys reading, traveling, gardening, playing games, volunteering, organizing, and spending time with family, friends, and especially her grandchildren.

Jim Bruce



Jim Bruce and his wife of 31 years, Kristy, have lived on a small cow/calf farm outside Urbana for the past twenty years. Jim has a bachelor's degree in history from Indiana University and has held many positions in the Cedar Rapids area, including Systems Analyst, Network Analyst and Financial Analyst for a major telecom company. Most recently, Jim works for the Urbana branch of Northeast Security Bank as Assistant VP/Branch Manager for the past five years. Jim and Kristy have two children, who are both married. Jim and his wife enjoy spending time with the kids and their new grandson.

Jim currently serves as a Treasurer for the Urbana Lions Club and is a board member of Urbana Christian Church. He has also served as Chair of the Benton County ISU Extension and Outreach Council, Polk Township Clerk, Polk 101 4-H Leader and a coach for the Urbana Little League.

BOARD DISTRICT 4

Gary McKenna



Gary and his wife of 32 years, Teresa, live on a small hog farm south of Vinton. Gary works in the insurance industry, where he is the owner of Van Eschen-Strong Insurance and has been in a management role at Eden Mutual Insurance for 25 years, 12 of those serving as Manager.

Gary has served as an ECI REC director for six years where he has earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate. He currently represents ECI REC on the CIPCO's (G&T provider) board of directors.

Gary recently retired from the Vinton Fire Department, where he was a member for 32 years, 12 of those years serving as Fire Chief. Gary is a member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Vinton and enjoys golf, snowmobiling and spending time with family.

John Holst



John and his wife Kristin operate a cow-calf and sheep operation on their farm outside Vinton. John is a lifelong member of ECI REC, graduating from Vinton High School and later earned a degree in Animal Science through Hawkeye Community College. John worked as a Livestock Production Specialist for Growmark and Land O' Lakes from 1976-2002 and has served US Bank in Vinton as an Ag Lender and Vice President since 2002. John also is a realtor with Johnson Real Estate. John and Kristin have two daughters and four grandchildren.

John is the Treasurer of the Benton County ISU Extension and Outreach Council and serves as a council representative to the 4-H Youth Committee. He is also a current Eden Township Trustee and a member of the Vinton Lions Club and Vinton Unlimited. John enjoys being involved in the community, hunting, fishing, Iowa athletics and Minnesota Vikings football.

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BOARD DISTRICT 3



Brian McNulty

Brian graduated from Benton Community High School and went on to pursue a degree in Ag Business from Kirkwood Community College. He has worked part-time as the City Clerk for the City of Blairstown for almost 18 years. When he is not at City Hall, you can find Brian on his row crop, hay, and cattle farm.

Brian has enjoyed serving as an ECI REC board member for the past year and is working to obtain his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate. Brian is actively involved in the Benton County ISU Extension and Outreach Council and serves as a council representative on the 4-H Committee. In addition, he also serves on the Alliance Mutual Insurance board and the Benton County Landfill Commission. Brian is also the Trustee for St Clair Township in Benton County.



Kristina Carte

Kristina Carte is a lifelong resident of Benton County and currently lives on her family's *Century Farm* outside of Atkins with husband, David. Kristina was raised on a dairy farm where she received a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility to church and community. Kristina is a retired registered nurse and certified parish nurse. Over her career, she worked in cardiology, workers' compensation and was a hospice director. Kristina and David have two children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Kristina served on the Atkins Fire Department for 13 years as a volunteer EMT. She previously served on the board for Central Lutheran School and has always held an active role in church and community events. She is currently the leader of her church's bible study. Kristina and her husband enjoy spending time with family, camping and fishing.



Joey Zweigart

Joey is no stranger to ECI REC – he has depended on the Cooperative for electricity his entire life. After graduating from Benton Community High School, he went on to pursue a degree in Diesel Ag Mechanics through Kirkwood Community College. Joey has worked at Biercrest Farms, Titan Machinery and most recently has been working for Koopman Forage Services as a Hay Grinder since 2014. Joey and his fiancée, Emily Olson, are excited to begin their married lives this Summer.

Joey is an active member of the Benton County Cattlemen's Association and has served as Secretary for the last two years. Joey is also a volunteer for the Benton Community School's Fine Arts Program, where he spends several weekends in the fall and winter months transporting equipment to fine arts competitions and assisting with local events for Benton Community Schools. In his spare time, Joey enjoys restoring and painting tractors, along with spending time with family and friends.