

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

IOWA RURAL POWER

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Grassroots group advocates for the voices of rural Iowans.

BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

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Check out two ways to go electric this spring.



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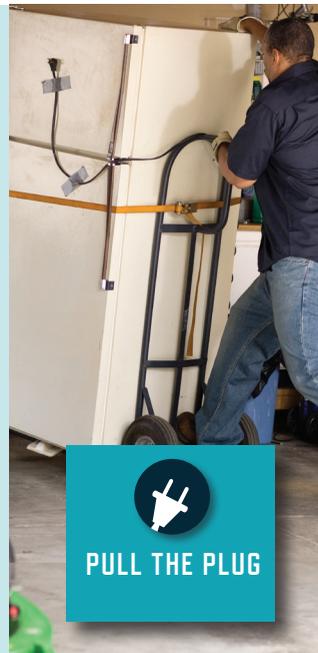
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WE PAY YOU TO PULL THE PLUG

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

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



PULL THE PLUG

take the member challenge

- KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON:** Projects for 2021 include replacing ____ miles of overhead lines and 18.1 miles of underground lines.
- COMMUNITY CONNECTED:** These donations are used to pay for _____ or the cost of winterizing the homes of ECI REC members who need assistance.
- ENERGY WISE:** Electric _____ have come a long way in the last few years.

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

last issue's challenge winners

The following names were drawn from the Jan./Feb. 2021 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Shirley Kress | Richard Greiner |
| Richard Carver | Joel & Molly Greenley |
| Joyce Kitson | Jane Wells |
| Eugene Geiger | Duane & Darlene Pleis |
| Donald & Kalyn Putz | Verlen Fulton |
| Mike & Diane LaGrange | Lyle & Dixie Eschweiler |
| Lester & Debra Hyke | Judy Irish |
| Carol Murray | Anthony Fish |

Stay connected! We post operations news and outage updates at facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec.

Calendar Notes

REMINDERS

- Sunday, March 14: Daylight Saving Time
- Sunday, March 28: Palm Sunday
- Friday, April 2: Good Friday
- Sunday, April 4: Easter

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS

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

WEBSITE

www.ecirec.coop

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

(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

Spring 2021 Operations Update

A snapshot of this year's Ops projects

a Keeping the Lights On feature

SPRING IS ON ITS WAY, which means the ECI REC Operations team is gearing up for this year's Work Plan and maintenance projects. Here is a quick preview of some of the projects they will tackle in 2021.

WORK PLAN PROJECTS - Line crews are in the process of line patrol inspection, while also working on regular maintenance projects. OCR (oil circuit recloser) maintenance is also underway.

The new five-year 2021–2025 Work Plan has been approved. Projects for 2021 include replacing 18.7 miles of overhead lines and 18.1 miles of underground lines. In February, ECI REC's overhead contractor—Highline Construction, Inc., of Paynesville, MN—began working on the overhead lines. Weather permitting, our underground contractor—CRC Trenching Co. of Watkins, IA—will begin work in mid-April.

VEGETATION CONTROL & TREE TRIMMING -

Vegetation control will be done on the Maryville and Becca substation circuits. The contractor—Landmark Turf Services, LLC, of Dunkerton, IA—will complete 135 miles on the distribution system in 2021.

Maurer Tree Service, LLC, of Fairbank, IA, will be the contractor for 110 miles of tree trimming and vegetation maintenance on the Karr and Fairbank substation circuits.

NEW OPERATIONS TEAM MEMBER -

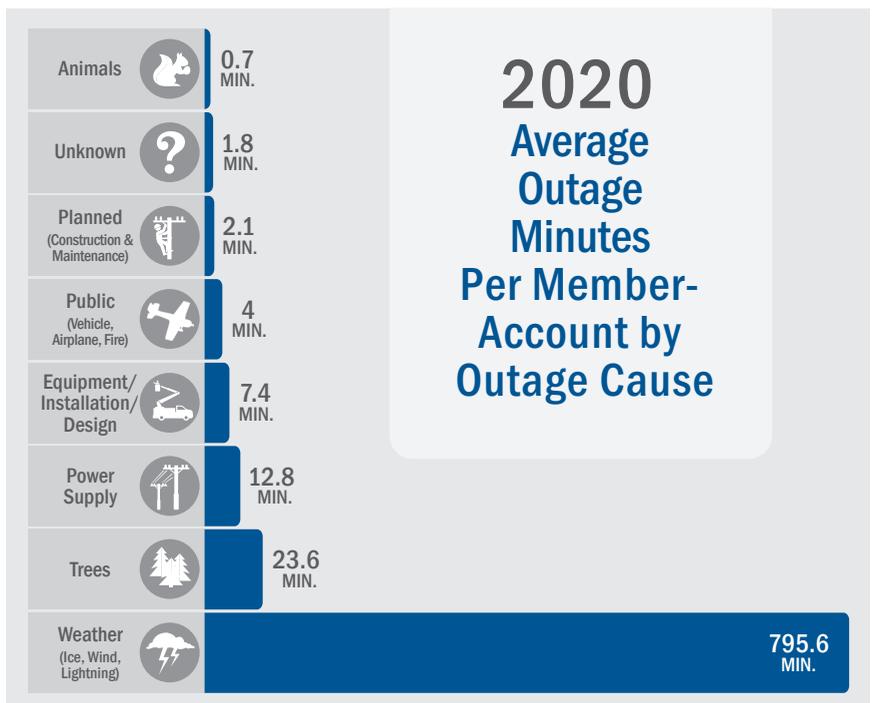
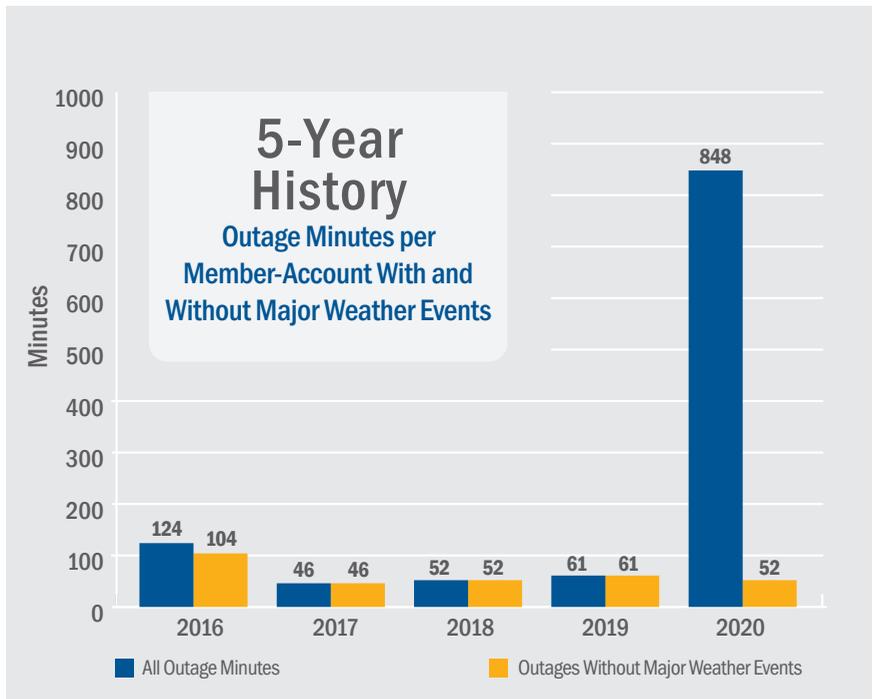
In mid-March, Bryn Jones from Independence will join the Operations team as part-time spring help. Bryn has been accepted into the Powerline Technology program at Northwest Community College and will help out at both ECI REC Operations Centers as needed through the month of May, before heading off to school.

ADDRESSING IMPACT OF AUGUST DERECHO -

Our Operations team is working hard to continue assessments and documentation related to the August 2020 derecho. We experienced major outages and severe damage to our infrastructure and CIPCO's transmission system. 

On the cover: Crews work to replace old cutouts. Photo credit: Tom Schmitt

In August 2020, a devastating derecho, with winds nearing 140 miles per hour in some places, carved a path of unprecedented destruction throughout ECI REC's territory. The first chart below shows that the 2020 outage time per member-account, with the derecho factored in, was 848 minutes. The second chart below shows a breakdown for that 848 minutes by cause for 2020. Over the past four years, the average time was 70.75 minutes per member-account.





Members Help Members by Contributing to RECare

a Community Connected article

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

In 2020, 69 members donated \$6,520 to RECare. Some donated once a year, while others had the Cooperative add a few dollars to their electric bills each month. No matter the size or frequency of the donation, it made a difference! We are proud our members are digging into their pockets to help others.

RECare funds are distributed to qualifying members through community action agencies. Donations from our northern service area are administered by Operation Threshold, while donations from our southern service area are administered by Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP). If you would like to support RECare, visit ecirec.coop. Hover over Account Services, look down the list for Member Programs, and click on RECare Program.



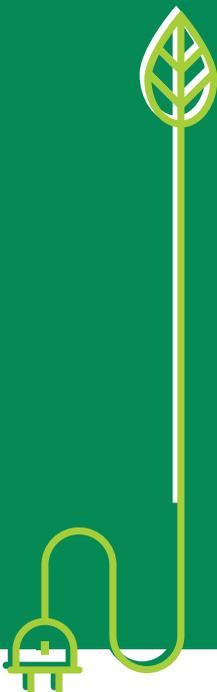
Scan to fill out form online.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

March/April 2021 Heartland Link 4

Source: www.energy.gov



Rural Power

Iowa's electric cooperatives

Energizing rural economic growth

Get Involved in Iowa Rural Power TODAY!

Iowa Rural Power is a grassroots organization advocating for the interests of rural Iowa.

a Looking Out for You feature

WITH IOWA'S POPULATION shifting to urban and suburban areas, it is more important than ever for the voices of rural Iowa to remain strong and vigilant. Policymakers must understand how proposed energy policies will uniquely affect the future economic well-being of Iowa's rural economies.

That's where Iowa Rural Power steps in.

Who is Iowa Rural Power?

Iowa Rural Power is a grassroots campaign run by member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives. They have an authentic, American story to tell and are working together to help make sure policymakers and candidates represent the interests of rural Iowa. Rural Power advocates lead the way in promoting safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy, as well as a bright and continuous economic future for Iowans.

Why do cooperative voices matter?

Because rural electric cooperatives are governed by those they serve, they are most aware of the energy and economic development needs within their local communities. This on-the-ground knowledge has enabled electric cooperatives to promote local economic growth for more than 75 years.

Iowa's electric cooperatives know that affordable electricity is fundamental for any economic environment that's going to foster growth and stability. That's why it's key for the employees and member-owners of electric cooperatives are to share their perspectives with policymakers and political candidates through organizations like Iowa Rural Power.

How do I get involved?

Visit iaruralpower.org/contact-us and sign up to receive updates on how you can have an impact on energy issues!

Source: iaruralpower.org



Two Ways You Can Go Electric this Spring

an Energy Wise article

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, which means 'tis the season for landscaping and home improvement projects. As you break out your tools this year, ECI REC invites you to consider going electric!

Electricity is a cheaper, greener, and smarter way to meet energy needs. That's why many consumers are switching from traditional gas-powered tools and appliances to electric. This trend is called "beneficial electrification."

Here are two beneficial electrification ideas to consider this spring.

Invest in an electric lawn mower

Electric mowers have come a long way in the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage—but the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are more expensive than their gas-powered counterparts; they typically range from \$200 to \$500. But much of the upfront cost can be recovered, since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas. Electric engines are also quieter and generally require less maintenance than gas engines.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require only an hour or two to fully charge. Most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a big yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may still best suit your needs.



Unlike models from only a few years ago, many of today's electric mowers have the power and battery life to keep up with gas mowers. Photo credit: Sjankauskas | Dreamstime.com.

Install an electric water heater

Electric water heaters are safer than propane (gas) heaters. They require no venting or gas line, and they offer no CO₂ concerns. They're also low-maintenance and require zero clearance to install.

Importantly, electric water heaters are both affordable and energy efficient. It will cost a family of four about \$40 per month to operate an energy-efficient 50-gallon electric water heater. Remember that electric rates are considerably more stable than gas; ECI REC's price per kilowatt-hour has increased 4.6% (less than a half a cent) over the past 10 years.

Members who buy a new, energy-efficient electric water heater are eligible to receive a \$75 rebate. You can receive a \$650 rebate for purchasing a heat pump water heater.

Questions about electric lawn mowers, water heaters, or beneficial electrification? Call 877-850-4343 and let us help! As a member-owned cooperative, we work for you, offering friendly, local, reliable, no-cost help with all your energy-efficient household decisions. ♻️

DISCOVER THE VALUE OF 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.

- » Emmy Lou Candles
- » Polar Blair's Den
- » Bill's Pizza & Smokehouse
- » Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances
- » E & T NAPA Auto Parts
- » Fabulous Fridays
- » Heartland Acres Agribition Center
- » In the Country Garden & Gifts
- » Michael & Dowd
- » Okoboji Grill
- » Styles Unlimited
- » Berry's Lanes, Inc.
- » Cameron Clothing Company
- » Clingman Pharmacy, Inc.
- » Frazier Nursery
- » Henkle Creek Mercantile
- » Subway
- » Viking Sewing Center
- » The NEWS/Buchanan County Review

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



Apple



Android

SUPPORT RENEWABLES IN IOWA > You can volunteer to support the development of renewable energy production facilities in Iowa via your monthly bill. Per month in 2020, an average of 77 ECI REC members contributed an average of \$50.00 each to support the production of renewable energy in Iowa. Member support for the year totaled \$3,817.80.

- Cost is \$2.10 for each 100 kWh. Purchase only 100 kWh or any multiple of 100 kWh.
- All voluntary contributions from members to this fund will be used for the development of alternative energy production facilities in Iowa. Alternative energy production facilities may include wind energy, biomass, solar, and other nontraditional generation technologies.
- Once you have signed up, your participation continues until you notify us that you wish to make a change.

IOWA RENEWABLE CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Name: _____

ECI REC Account #: _____

Email: _____

Daytime phone #: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I wish to support the purchase of:

100 kWh for an extra \$2.10 per month

200 kWh for an extra \$4.20 per month

300 kWh for an extra \$6.30 per month

_____ kWh at \$2.10 per 100 kWh per month

Please return to: East-Central Iowa REC
PO Box 248 | Urbana, Iowa 52345



Celebrating an ECI REC Promotion

a Keeping the Lights On spotlight

ON JANUARY 25, Katie Stadheim

accepted the position of human resource director at ECI REC! Katie

joined the Cooperative in January 2019 and has been serving as the administrative and benefits assistant.

Prior to ECI REC, Katie worked in human resources and recruiting. Her skills have been incredibly valuable as we strive to improve our processes in employee payroll and benefits, recruiting, Board administration, and pandemic protocol. In addition to her current responsibilities, Katie will now assist the management team with succession planning, employee development, and maintaining the Cooperative's subsidiary balancing ledger for general funds.

Congratulations, Katie! 🎉

Committed to our Community: ECI REC's 2020 Donations

a Community Connected update

COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY is one of East-Central Iowa REC's core values and one of the seven principles by which all cooperatives are expected to operate. In 2020, ECI REC gave \$57,225 to 36 causes, including 10 college scholarships. This also included \$20,000 donated to the Benton County Disaster Recovery Coalition, a nonprofit organization that meets the needs of community members affected by disaster.

Some of the donations came from the Cooperative's general funds, but much of the money came from our Community Reinvestment Fund, where unclaimed patronage dividends are deposited. 🎉

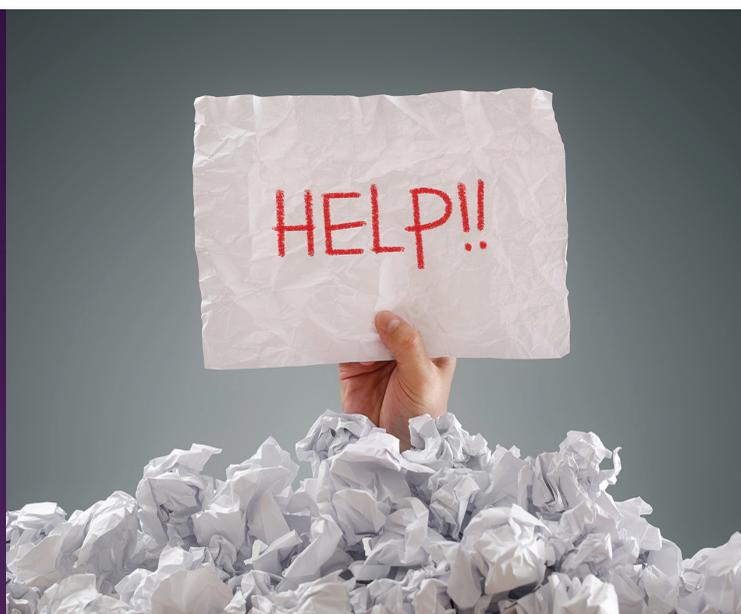
Think Green: Go Paperless!



Go paperless with SmartHub for convenient access to your bill anytime, anywhere. Going paperless isn't only going to save you trips to the mailbox, it also helps save the environment. View and pay your bill on your mobile device or on the Web by going paperless with SmartHub.

Go green with SmartHub.

Available on Apple and Android devices and on the Web.



Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

Happy Arbor Day!
Friday,
April 30

Replanting trees after the August 2020 derecho is top of our members' minds, and for good reason. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard ... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

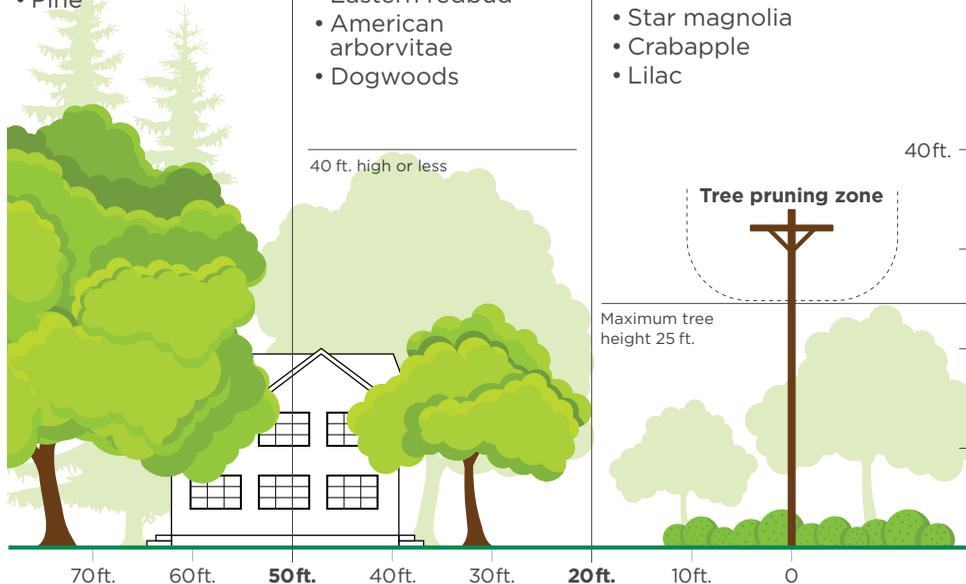
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

SMALL TREES

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet, such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

2021 Ag Rebates from ECI REC

an Energy Wise feature

Photo credit: Shimon Bar | Dreamstime.com

VENTILATION AND CIRCULATION

- » Ventilation fans (BESS lab rated at .10 in static pressure): \$3/in. (fan blade diameter)
- » Ventilation thermostat controller with humidistat: \$25 each
- » Circulation fans (BESS lab rated at thrust/kW requirements): \$1/in. (fan blade diameter)
- » High-volume, low-speed fans (minimum 10' diameter): \$35/ft. (fan blade diameter)

DAIRY OPERATIONS

- » Dairy heat reclaimers: \$5 per milking cow
- » Dairy milk pre-coolers: \$4 per milking cow
- » VSD vacuum pumps: \$40/horsepower
- » Scroll compressors: \$250 each (must replace reciprocating compressor)

LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

- » Electric heated livestock waterers: \$50 each (≤ 175W per trough opening)
- » Single-crate heating pads: \$25/pad (≤ 85W)
- » Double-crate heating pads: \$50/pad (≤ 170W)
- » Heat lamp or pad controller: \$50/controller

LIGHTING: Fixtures must be ENERGY STAR® or DesignLights Consortium qualified

HORTICULTURE LED FIXTURES

New construction or replacement:

- » 8-14W, \$10/fixture
- » 15-49W, \$15/fixture
- » 50-99W, \$25/fixture
- » ≥ 100W, \$40/fixture

OCCUPANCY SENSORS: \$8 each

OUTDOOR LIGHTING: Must be dusk-to-dawn and controlled by an automatic photocell sensor

Outdoor security LED lighting:

- » 20-34W, \$10/fixture
- » 35-49W, \$20/fixture
- » 50-74W, \$40/fixture
- » 75-124W, \$50/fixture
- » ≥ 125W, \$60/fixture

April
Is Safe
Digging
Month!

Be Safe. Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Spring is near, and you may be planning outdoor projects. Whether it's a deck addition, planting a tree, trenching in fields, or a landscaping masterpiece, remember to call Iowa One Call by dialing 811 before you dig. Although light gardening typically doesn't call for deep digging, other seemingly simple tasks like planting shrubs or installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines. A severed line can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm the person digging, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

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 Board.

Toll free: 877-565-4450

Fax: 515-725-7399

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

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

**4 GRAND KIDS
2 YEARS FROM
RETIREMENT** | **35 FEET IN THE AIR**

BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S YOU I'M WORRIED ABOUT.

HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH. The last thing he needs is for you to drive into his utility truck because you ignored the flashing lights, cones, and signs. When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.



**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) is April 26-30. This year's theme is "Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives." During this annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season, please use extra caution driving in work zones.

Privacy Policy for East-Central Iowa REC

Our Commitment to Privacy: At East-Central Iowa REC, confidentiality is very important to us. As we continue to improve and expand our services and delivery channels, we recognize our members' need and desire to preserve their privacy and confidentiality. East-Central Iowa REC recognizes the trust you have placed in us and is committed to safeguarding the privacy of our members' information. The following policy affirms our continued commitment to preserving member confidentiality.

The Information We Collect: We receive and retain information about our members through many sources:

- » Information we receive from you on applications or other forms;
- » Information about your transactions with us, our affiliates, or others; and
- » Information we receive from a consumer-reporting agency.

The Way We Use Information: We limit the use and collection of nonpublic personal information to that which is necessary to maintain and administer financial services.

We do not share this information with outside parties unless:

- » The information is provided to help complete a member-initiated transaction (such as credit reporting agencies, document processing companies, etc.);
- » The member has requested it;
- » The disclosure is required by law (e.g., subpoena, investigation of fraudulent activity, etc.); or
- » The disclosure is required by banking regulation (e.g., Fair Lending Reporting Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act).

When member information is provided to any of the third parties just mentioned, that third party must agree to adhere to privacy principles that provide for keeping such information confidential.

Limiting Employee Access to Information:

East-Central Iowa REC limits employee access to member information to those with a business reason for knowing such information. All of our employees are educated on the importance of confidentiality and member privacy. Any employee who violates the financial privacy of our members will be

subject to appropriate disciplinary measures and possible termination.

Protection of Information via Established Security Procedures:

To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the correct use of information, we have put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information.

Maintaining Accurate Information:

We have established procedures so that our members' financial information is accurate, current, and complete in accordance with reasonable commercial standards. East-Central Iowa REC will respond to requests to correct inaccurate information in a timely manner.

At East-Central Iowa REC, we value our member relationships. We want you to understand how we use the information you provide and our commitment to ensuring your personal privacy. If you have any questions about how East-Central Iowa REC protects your information, please contact us at 319-443-4343 or email ecirec@ecirec.coop.

Grain Bins: Farming Safely

a Safety feature

AS REWARDING AS IT MAY BE, farming is an extremely difficult job—and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At ECI REC, safety is top priority for both our employees and our members. That's why our Cooperative provides assistance in planning a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins.

Grain bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures. Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas with existing bins, proximity to overhead power lines must be considered.

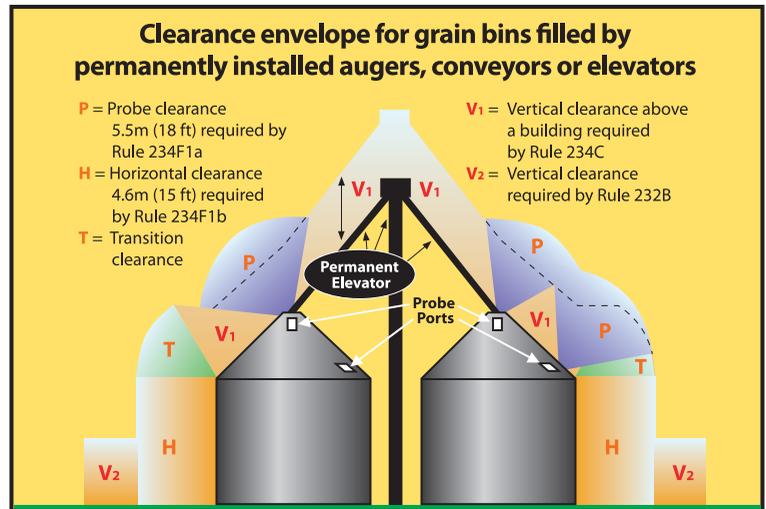
The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors, and elevators. The drawings accompanying this article show the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact your electric cooperative.

According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 -- 25.2(3)b, an electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line that does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors, or elevators built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board.)

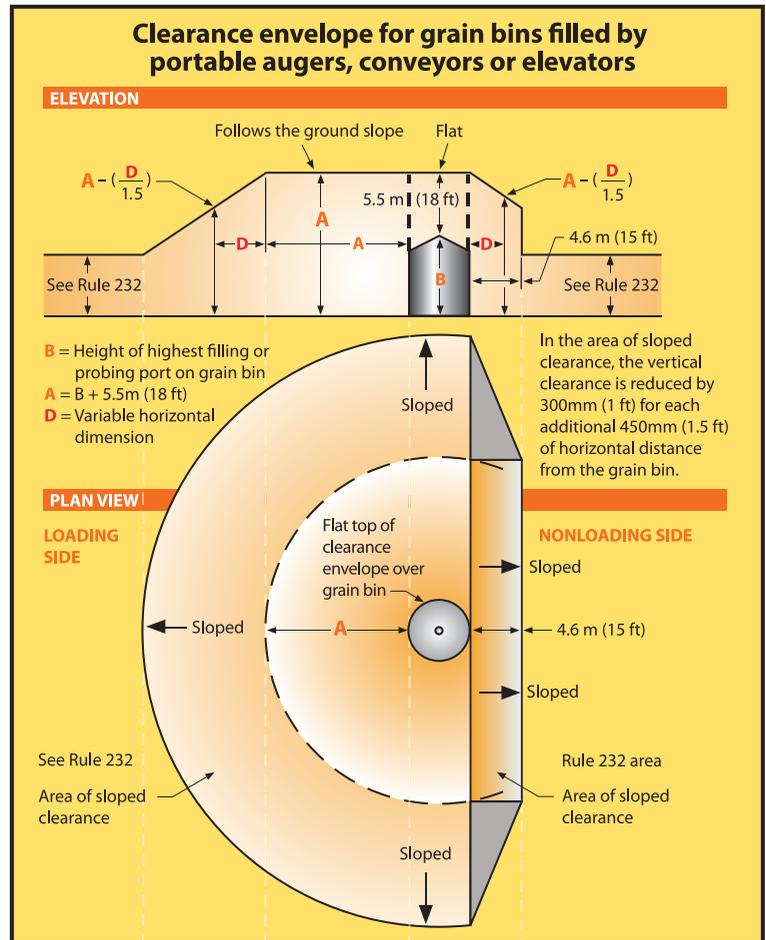
The Cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations, please call your local electric cooperative.



Get your safety sticker from ECI REC.



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ATTENTION MEMBERS: Use Caution When Burning Ditches this Spring

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 SAFE 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.

Message From the CEO continued from page 12

2021 Construction Work Plan Budget for System Improvements

New services construction	\$131,000
40.8 miles of line replacement	\$2,563,225
Substation upgrades	\$100,000
New transformers, meters, & special equipment:	\$335,200
Service upgrades	\$146,750
Sectionalizing equipment (such as breakers & fuses)	\$5,000
Pole, equipment, & conductor replacement	\$1,112,500
Security lights	\$28,500
Technology	\$54,000

we will need to continue these larger annual investments through 2025.

Maintaining a power grid that includes 2,284 miles of distribution line (1,834 miles of overhead line and 450 miles of underground line) is an investment. That's why the 2021 budget includes \$330,000 in preventative and ongoing line maintenance programs, including pole and underground testing, meter testing, tree trimming, transformers, and breaker maintenance.

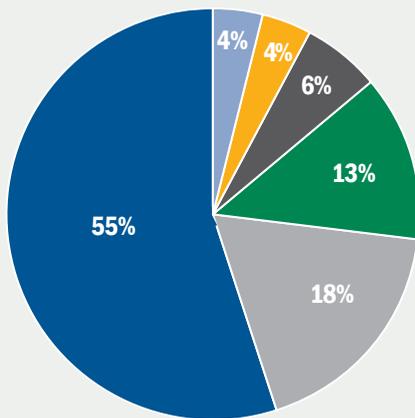
Members' expectations of power usage have also evolved over the past 80-plus years—we have more technology at our fingertips than ever before, and renewable energy has entered our everyday lives. Nevertheless, the Board is happy to report that the budget indicates a stable year, and there should be no need for a rate increase in 2021. While it is unknown what the future may bring, you can rest assured ECI REC will remain agile in adapting to changes within the industry and whatever Mother Nature sends our way.

However, as you might recall, we restructured our rates in 2015, so the Facility Charge captured more of the fixed costs of making electricity available. According to ECI REC's 2020 Cost of Service Study, the residential Facility Charge is only capturing 75% of these fixed costs to deliver electricity to our 8,985 member-accounts. Your Board of Directors is keeping a pulse on material costs and the general cost of doing business, which continue to increase. But your Board also understands that many members sometimes have a tough time making ends meet, especially after a year like 2020; the Board is very cautious about implementing large rate increases, understanding a few small increases verses one large increase is easier on our members.

At the end of the day, ECI REC's goal will always remain the same: to provide our members with safe, reliable, and environmentally friendly electricity. At the same time, we all know there is a cost to fulfilling these goals and remaining progressive. No matter what the future brings, ECI REC will remain dedicated to putting our membership first and keeping your lights on. 

2021 Budget at a Glance

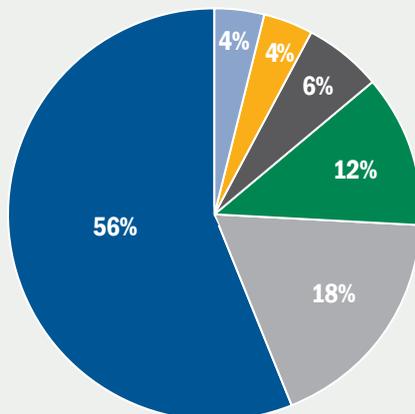
Budget Revenue: \$21,691,813



- Cost of power
- Depreciation, taxes, administrative and general expense
- Operations and maintenance
- Interest
- Consumer accounts, service, and information
- Operating margins

Where Your Dollars Were Spent in 2020

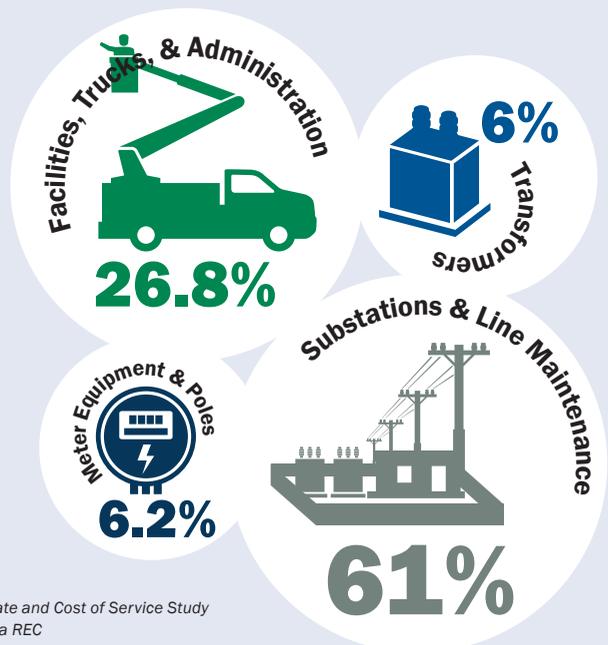
2020 Revenue: \$21,410,155



What Does My Facility Charge Cover?

Ever wondered what your Facility Charge supports? It takes a solid infrastructure and great people to keep safe, 99.99% reliable and affordable power flowing to your home.

To the right, you'll find a breakdown of ECI REC's Facility Charge.



Source: ECI REC 2020 Rate and Cost of Service Study
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Brian McNulty Steps into Vacant Board Seat

a Cooperative Difference announcement

ECI REC would like to welcome Brian McNulty to the ECI REC Board of Directors! In accordance with the provisions outlined in our Articles of Incorporation, Article VII, Section 3 and Section 4, Brian was appointed to fill the vacant Board seat for District #3, which came open when Allen Albers announced he would be retiring in December 2020.

Brian graduated from Benton Community High School and has a bachelor's degree in ag business. Since 1999, he has raised beef cattle and a few crops on a farm in Watkins. He has also worked part-time as city clerk for Blainstown since 2004.

Outside his work, Brian is actively involved within his community. He has been a member of the Benton County Extension Council since 2015 and has been a Board member of the Southeast Iowa Angus Association since 2019. He also serves as the Benton County landfill commissioner for Blainstown and has been a Board member of the Alliance Mutual Insurance Association since 2020. Congratulations and welcome, Brian! 🍷



District #3 Director
Brian McNulty

Allen Albers Retires from the Board of Directors

a Cooperative Difference story

IN DECEMBER, Allen Albers announced he would be retiring and would not seek reelection for his Board seat. Al has been a longstanding member of ECI REC's Board of Directors, with 35 years of service. His current term would have concluded in June 2022.

Al was first elected to the Board in 1985. During his tenure, he has served as Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer. For 16 years, he has been ECI REC's representative on the Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) Board of Directors.

Al decided to run for the Board of Directors in 1985, after being approached by his uncle, who was retiring from his seat for District #3. Al had been a member of the Benton County Electric Cooperative Association for six years at the time. He served for 10 years on the Benton County REC Board, before the cooperative merged with Buchanan County REC in 1995 to become East-Central Iowa REC.

"There are challenges and responsibilities that come with being on the ECI REC and CIPCO Boards," said Al. "I've witnessed a lot of changes at both the distribution and the generation and transmission levels. I always enjoyed the discussions we had, as the ultimate goal of both Boards is the betterment of the membership—whether that's the nearly 7,900 ECI REC members or CIPCO's 13 member-owned electric cooperatives."

Last year, Al retired from his farming operation—470 acres of corn, soybeans, oats, and hay near Keystone. He and his wife, Ruth, who is a retired teacher, continue to live on the farm and enjoy staying active. He looks forward to retirement, but he will miss the camaraderie that comes with serving as a Director.

"As an independent farmer, being on these Boards was a great opportunity to meet and become friends with different people who were all trying to accomplish the same things," said Al. "It's been like an extended family that I'm really going to miss."

From everyone at ECI REC: Thank you, Al, for your 35 years of dedicated service! You will be greatly missed—we wish you all the best! 🍷



A new milestone, a new millennium. Al being recognized for 15 years of service in 2000.



Al receiving a certificate in 2010 to celebrate 25 years on the ECI REC Board of Directors.

YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
(2020/2021 Vice President)

Board District 2 - Julie Kester

Board District 3 - Brian McNulty

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna
(2020/2021 Asst. Secretary/Treasurer)

Board District 6 - Don Shonka

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

Board District 9 - Steve Rau
(2020/2021 President)

Board District 10 - Ryan Kress
(2020/2021 Secretary/Treasurer)

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: 2007 John Deere Z425 zero-turn mower, 48" deck, and 529 hours; new battery, oil, and hydro levers; \$2,000. Ph: 319-721-5000.

FOR SALE: Two 2017 50cc Wolf Brand Scooters, model ZN50QT, with rear storage compartment, flag, lights, cover, and less than 100 miles; \$1,200 per scooter OBO. Ph: 319-721-5000.

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the May/June 2021 *Heartland Link* must be received by April 1, 2021.

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.

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CLIP AND MAIL

See page 2 for the Member Challenge questions.

Answers: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

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

Find tools for members at
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CEO TERESA FLOYD

Message From the CEO: The Balancing Act of Budgeting

Reliability, rates, equity, debt, and more

BUDGET SEASON is one of my favorite times of year at ECI REC. It is a time to reflect on our financial success: Did we accomplish all we had planned? What will the new year bring?

We take budgeting very seriously at ECI REC—it is a detailed process that begins in October and ends in December with the Board's review and approval. The management team works with our employees to determine needs in the coming year. We also evaluate the current and future energy usage of our membership. This is an extremely important consideration, as power supply cost represents nearly 60% of our expenses. Finally, we evaluate our technology needs, facilities and fleet improvements, depreciation, and long-term debt interest.

Your Cooperative does have debt—it is a necessary part of our \$22.4 million five-year Construction Work Plan, which is an investment in our distribution system. The Work Plan and maintenance projects help us achieve our number-one goal of providing safe, reliable, and affordable power to our members. Since 2007, we've had an aggressive capital budget for improving our distribution system, and we project

continued on page 10