

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## PATRONAGE RETURNED page 4

\$500,112 retired by Board; members saw a deferred patronage credit on June bill.

## IOWA ENERGY CENTER TRANSFER page 5

Iowa Energy Center will move under oversight of the Iowa Economic Development Authority.



## THE ROAD TO THE BUCKET TRUCK page 9

Get a glimpse of the career path aspiring line workers must follow.



## END-OF-SESSION REMARKS page 10

Iowa lawmakers expand "move over or slow down" law; progress toward property tax parity for geothermal.

# Annual Meeting of the Members Recap

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Photo by Lisa Franck



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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\$500,112 retired by Board

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Electric co-ops perspective

## our members say thank you

“The guys who are part of any of the electrical linemen are outstanding. No matter what the weather, they are always there while we stay warm, dry, and cool. Thanks to all of you.” **CINDY WALTON**

“You are all the best! Thank you for all your hard work.” **DIANE CLOUSE**

“Thanks for being on the prowl immediately post-storm, even in the farthest reaches of your territory.” **SHELLY HAGEN**

## take the member challenge

1. **LOOKING OUT FOR YOU:** Energy efficiency and conservation are now normalized and successful in the marketplace, and \_\_\_\_ is a top leader in renewable energy generation.

2. **COMMUNITY CONNECTED:** ECI REC Lineman Brian Reidy represented East-Central Iowa REC with one of the Cooperative's \_\_\_\_ trucks.

3. **KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON:** The new line workers will be periodically evaluated and move up the apprentice ranks until, after \_\_\_\_ years, they are promoted to full line worker.

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](mailto: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 August 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 May/June 2017 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Elizabeth Bare

Calvin Harks

Jeff & Tracy Hekel

Delbert King

Steve & Amy Krug

John & Carol Lappe

Steven Lucas

Wanda Noe

Lois Rinderknecht

Roxann Schwartz

Charles & Judy Stark

T. J. Stecklein

Ryan & Kristin Svoboda

William Venneman III

Katherine Wellner

Elaine Winberg

## Calendar Notes

July 4 - Closed for Independence Day

Sept. 4 - Closed for Labor Day

## Contact ECI REC

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(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)



OPERATIONS NEWS  
OUTAGE UPDATES

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# Annual Meeting of the Members Recap

*a Cooperative Difference feature*

## THE 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

of East-Central Iowa REC was held on Thursday, June 15, and it was well attended.

This year, we were honored to welcome guest speaker Mary McLaury, the former COO of Touchstone Energy® Cooperative. She spoke about the meaning behind the cooperative difference. We were also pleased to have 2016 Youth Tour alumnae Kirstie Martin and Jamie Thompson share about the once-in-a-lifetime experiences they had in Washington, D.C. They thanked the ECI REC Board and membership for the opportunity. Finally, Roger Uthoff, Navy vet and treasurer of Eastern Iowa

Honor Flight, thanked ECI REC for its support. He asked the veterans in attendance to stand, and the audience applauded the men and women who have served our country.

As usual, Board elections took place during the meeting. Jeff Elliott (District 11), Chris Sackett (District 12), and Steve Rau (District 26) were all re-elected to serve three-year terms. During the Board of Directors reorganization meeting, which took place after the meal, Steve Rau was re-elected to the office of president. Elected to new leadership positions were Jeff Elliott, vice president; Ryan Kress, secretary/treasurer; and Chris Sackett, assistant secretary/treasurer.

For the meal, McElroy's Catering of Winthrop provided barbecue pork sandwiches, side dishes, and beverages. Joseph, Frank, and Karen Weber also served ice cream. Members attending the Annual Meeting received reusable food bags courtesy of East-Central Iowa REC, Eastern Iowa Honor Flight, Quaker Oats, and PepsiCo. Leftover food bags were donated to the local food pantry. Door prizes included several gift cards, as well as a cash prize and bill credits. 📁

## Board Election Results From the Annual Meeting



**Jeff Elliott was re-elected to represent District 11 and will also fill the office of vice president.**



**Chris Sackett was re-elected to serve in District 12 and will serve as assistant secretary/treasurer.**



**Steve Rau will fulfill another three-year term in District 26; he was also re-elected to the position of president.**



**Ryan Kress was named secretary/treasurer.**



COVER STORY

## 22nd Annual Meeting Prize Winners

**Grand prize \$100 bill winner:**  
Doris Smith

**\$100 energy credit winners for mail-in ballots:**

> **District 1, Benton area:**  
Prairie Creek Church via James Hoffman

> **District 2, Buchanan area:**  
Lonny Hesse

**\$50 Walmart gift cards:**

Carl Evans  
Deb Reichen  
Robert Simmacher  
Donna Lohrer  
Charles Pettit  
Merle Wilson, Jr.  
Samuel Overturf  
Burton Moore  
David Inman  
Raymond Michael  
William Seely  
Yasmine Rogers  
Roger Uthoff  
Fern Lee  
Russell Adams  
Donald Fratzke





## Board Returns \$500,112 to Members Through Patronage Dividends

*a Cooperative Difference feature*

**AT ITS MAY BOARD MEETING**, the ECI REC Board of Directors approved the retirement of \$500,112, 100% of its 2002 and 10% of its 2010 margins, to members of the Cooperative. This month, 7,809 member-accounts that received electricity from East-Central Iowa REC in 2002 and 2010 should receive money back. These dollars represent your share of the deferred patronage dividends (profits) the Cooperative earned in 2002 and 2010. In the past 10 years, ECI REC has returned \$5,306,938 to its members.


Sixty-seven percent (5,197) of the 7,809 member-accounts receiving money back are active accounts currently receiving electricity from ECI REC. These active member-accounts will see a credit on their June bills. The remaining member-accounts that are no longer active (not currently receiving electricity from ECI REC) will receive their credits in the form

**Current Service Detail**

Balance Forward		\$0.00
Facility Charge		\$36.50
kWh Charges	1000 kWh @ 0.105	\$105.00
	151 kWh @ 0.093	\$14.04
County Tax		\$1.56
<b>Total Electric Charges</b>		<b>\$157.10</b>
Deferred Patronage Dividend	-\$46.85	
<b>Other Services &amp; Credits</b>		<b>-\$46.85</b>
<b>Total Electric, Other Services &amp; Credits</b>		<b>\$110.25</b>
<b>Total Amount Due 07/01/2017</b>		<b>\$110.25</b>
<b>\$1.65 (1.5%) late charge applies after 07/01/2017</b>		<b>\$111.90</b>


of a check that will be placed into the mail. If you do not receive a credit on your June bill, you did not receive electric service from ECI REC in 2002 and 2010. Email the Urbana office at [csr@ecirec.coop](mailto:csr@ecirec.coop) or call 877-850-4343 if you have any questions.

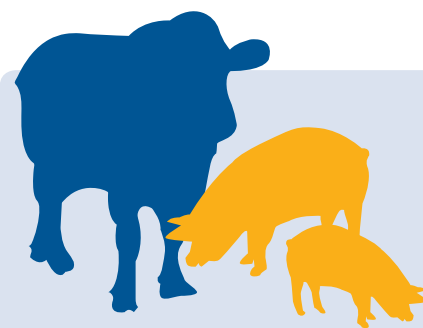
Since ECI REC is a nonprofit organization, members pay for their electricity at cost, and any margins left over at the end of the year after all expenses are covered are allocated in the form of patronage dividends. These margins include not only operating margins (generated directly by the sale of electricity to you), but also “non-operating” margins (interest from our investment of spare cash and patronage dividend allocations received by ECI REC as a member of other cooperatives from which it purchases goods and services).

As owners of the Cooperative, members provide equity by allowing ECI REC to hold on to these margins for a certain length of time. They are used to finance operations and system improvements, to cover the cost of maintaining the electric distribution system, and more. 

## Reminder: Notification Requirements for Alternative Energy Production Facilities

Owners of alternative energy production facilities that will be attached to an electric transmission or distribution line, no matter how small (solar-powered heat pumps, for example), are required to provide written notification to their utility of the intent to construct or install the facility at least 30 days prior to construction. Alternative energy production facilities are defined as solar, wind turbine, waste management, resource recovery, refuse-derived fuel, agricultural crops or residues, or wood-burning facilities used to generate electricity. In the written notice, the owner must provide information on the type of facility and the anticipated completion date of the construction.

If you have questions about the law or about interconnecting alternative energy facilities in general, please contact ECI REC at 877-850-4343. 



## ATTENTION LIVESTOCK OWNERS

If you have questions or concerns regarding stray voltage in your livestock confinement buildings or are planning the addition of a new facility, please call East-Central Iowa REC. We are committed to working with you and your electrician to eliminate any potential stray voltage concerns.

**CALL 877-850-4343**



Pay it your way with SmartHub's convenient payment options. Through SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and you can pay securely with just a few clicks through stored payment information in the mobile app or on the Web. Save time and avoid late fees or service disruptions by signing up for automatic payments. Set up your preferred payment method and take care of your bills quickly and conveniently.

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## Co-ops Support Iowa Energy Center's Transfer

*a Looking Out For You update*

**AS THE IOWA LEGISLATURE** debated budget cuts in late April, you may have heard the Iowa Energy Center brought up in the discussions and media coverage. Senate File 513 was passed and signed by the governor in May. This measure will transfer control of the Iowa Energy Center from Iowa State University's administration to the leadership of the Iowa Energy Office, which is housed within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). ISU fully supports this new and expanded role of the Iowa Energy Center, as do Iowa's electric cooperatives.

The Iowa Energy Center was created as an energy research and outreach center by the Iowa General Assembly back in 1990. The mission of the center is to assist Iowans in assessing technology related to energy efficiency and alternative energy production systems, as well as support educational programs that encourage energy efficiency. The Iowa Energy Center receives over \$4 million annually through a ratepayer tax of 0.1% of the annual operating revenues of Iowa's natural gas and electric utilities.

Over the years, Iowa consumers have certainly benefitted from these initiatives; many cooperative members received valuable information from the Iowa Energy Center when researching the benefits of on-site wind and solar gen-


eration. For many years, the Center also provided significant research assistance to the renewable fuels industry in developing and refining ethanol and biodiesel fuels. In 2016, the Iowa Energy Center worked with electric utilities, including Iowa's electric cooperatives, to publish the *Solar Energy PV Guide* to educate homeowners on the process and information needed to install consumer-owned solar generation. You can download the guide at [www.iowarec.org/publications/solar-resources](http://www.iowarec.org/publications/solar-resources).

In the 27 years since the Iowa Energy Center was founded, the energy industry and Iowa's energy landscape have changed dramatically. Energy efficiency and conservation are now normalized and successful in the marketplace, and Iowa is a top leader in renewable energy generation. The Iowa Energy Plan, published in December 2016, recommends the following as part of Strategy 2.2 to foster collaboration between the Iowa Energy Office and the Iowa Energy Center:

*"While both entities have similar missions, the scope of the Iowa Energy Office—housed within the IEDA—is broader than that of the Iowa Energy Center. This overlap presents opportunities for improved coordination, clarification of roles, and alignment of initiatives at both entities."*

*"In addition, as the current structure of the Iowa Energy Center has limited oversight outside of Iowa State University, the recommended coordination [with the Iowa Energy Office and IEDA] may improve transparency in how Iowa ratepayer funds are used."*

The Iowa Energy Plan, led by incoming governor Kim Reynolds, recommends the Iowa Energy Center move under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Energy Office and the IEDA, where it can focus on supporting underserved rural areas, expand the energy sector's workforce, work with manufacturers to commercialize technologies, build the market for electric vehicles, and advise utilities on cybersecurity preparedness. You can download a copy of the plan at [www.iowaenergyplan.org/resources.html](http://www.iowaenergyplan.org/resources.html).

Iowa's electric cooperatives have been calling for a thorough review and audit of the Iowa Energy Center for years to ensure it is operating in the best interests of the ratepayers, who are Iowa consumers like you. Iowa State University, Iowa's electric cooperatives, and the Iowa Energy Center support the transfer of authority to the IEDA to ensure the Center's operational transparency and accountability to ratepayers while continuing to provide guidance on ways to conserve energy and expand renewable technology. 



# Local Kids Explore Careers on Wheels

*A Community Connected story*



Photo by: Lisa Franck

**WHAT KID DOESN'T LOVE** big trucks and tractors? Turning this love into an opportunity to plant seeds for future careers was the goal of the first annual Careers on Wheels Open House held at East Elementary in Independence on May 15.

ECI REC Lineman Brian Reidy represented East-Central Iowa REC with one of the Cooperative's bucket trucks. He showcased the truck's equipment, as well as some of the gear line workers wear.

"This was a great opportunity to spark kids' interest in trade career opportunities," said ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow. "There will always be a need for these jobs—the trades provide young

adults with a very viable alternative to the four-year-or-more college degree."

Preschoolers through second graders and their families joined in the fun from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thanks to participation from over 15 organizations, kids got to explore a cement truck, a fire engine, a semi, an ambulance, a garbage truck, an end loader, a Humvee, a bulldozer, a road grader, and even the LifeGuard helicopter. They were encouraged to climb into the vehicles, check out the onboard equipment, and ask questions. "We hope this hands-on approach leads to interest in trade careers right here in these kids' own communities," said Marlow. 🌱

Members saved  
\$9,688 in 2016 by  
recycling appliances!

## PULL THE PLUG

Outdated appliances are energy hogs, driving up your monthly bill. Wouldn't you rather make money from them? Sign up to have them picked up for recycling via Pull the Plug.

- » REFRIGERATORS, \$35 EACH
- » FREEZERS, \$25 EACH
- » WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS, \$25 EACH

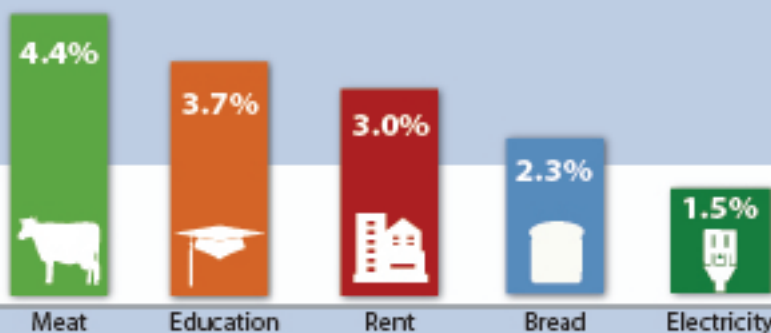
Complete the form on our website or call 877-850-4343 for more information.



## THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

 **Average Annual Price Increase 2010-2015**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

## ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG



**IOWA 811 ONE CALL** SM

800-292-8989



## Enter for a chance to win a Kill A Watt Electricity Meter!

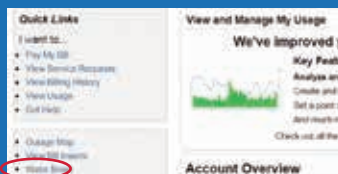
**Members who sign up to receive the monthly Watts \$mart e-tips by July 31 will have a chance to win one of 10 Kill A Watt Electricity Meters.** The meters attach to appliances and provide a direct readout of the hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly cost projections of each unit. The winners of the drawing will be announced on or before August 10.

### How to Sign Up

- **Scan the QR Code** with your smartphone
- **Contact Director of Member Service Adam Albertsen** at 319-443-3578 or [adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop](mailto:adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop)
- **Click on the Watts \$mart button** located on the ECI REC homepage



**Note:** Registered Smart-Hub users may sign up by simply clicking on the Watts \$mart Quick Link on the left-hand side of your ECI REC account page.



## Local Scholarship Awards Delivered



Photo by: Missy Rau

ECI REC Board President Steve Rau was on hand at Oelwein High School's end-of-year awards ceremony to present senior Natalie McMillan with her \$1,000 scholarship. Natalie is planning to attend Iowa State University. Board Directors Jim Barz and Gary McKenna were also in attendance at other presentations around the territory to hand out certificates in person.



## ON THE GO THIS SUMMER?

**DON'T FORGET! Your Co-op Connections® Card gets you discounts on everything from hotel stays and garden supplies to auto repairs and prescription drugs.**  
[www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop)

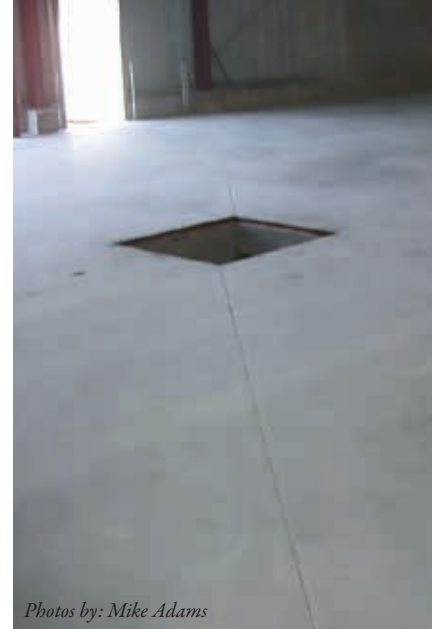
Download the free app to save without your card.



Misplaced your card?  
 Call us toll-free at 877-850-4343  
 or e-mail [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop)







# OPERATIONS UPDATE

Photos by: Mike Adams

**BUILDING PROGRESS >** At the end of May, the floor at the new Independence Operations Center was prepared for the installation of in-floor-heating equipment, and then a concrete layer was poured over the top.

**TRANSFORMER TESTING >** Every two years, ECI REC tests its substation transformers on several measures of overall equipment health, including moisture, dielectric, interfacial tension, acid, color/visual, and specific gravity. These tests are done to ensure the Cooperative is maintaining a proactive approach to maintenance—a failing transformer can be changed out and reconditioned before an outage occurs. ECI REC contracted T&R Electric Supply Company, Inc., out of Colman, South Dakota, to perform the testing.

In addition to these tests, failed components were discovered at the Quasqueton substation during the standard monthly substation inspection performed by ECI REC line workers. Engineers from CG changed out the failed 69 kV insulators and bushings. The bushings and repair time were covered under warranty.



Photos by: Travis Schellhorn



Photo by: Jared Grover (T & R Electrical Supply Company)



Photo by: Kevin Walton

## TRANSFORMER INVASION >

ECI REC lineworkers got a surprise when inspecting the Cooperative's underground facilities in May. Thousands of ants had made their home in a pad-mount transformer. The entire transformer was replaced.

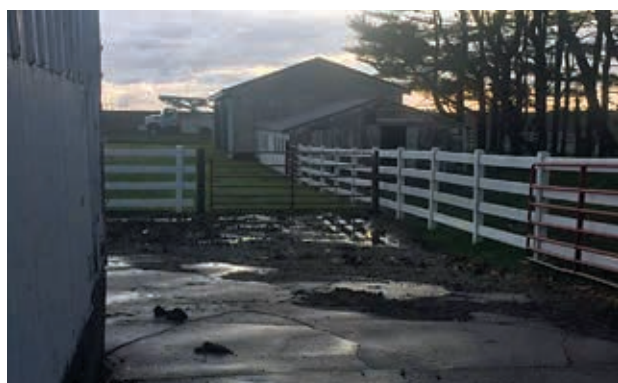


Photo by: Shelly Hagen

**MAY OUTAGE RECAP >** An overnight storm on May 17 caused outages throughout ECI REC's service area that affected over 800 members. The heaviest-hit area was just east of Rowley, where winds blew over seven of our power provider, CIPCO's, transmission poles.

With ECI REC's integrated technology and automated systems, Operations Manager Gary Marlow was able to switch power over from other substations to reenergize the distribution lines. Power was restored to all member-consumers within 50 minutes.

ECI REC line crews located six additional downed distribution poles; their locations indicated a possible storm path about a mile east of Highways 218 and 30, heading northeast through Newhall, Urbana, and Shellsburg.



# The Road to the Bucket Truck

*a Keeping the Lights On feature*

Two apprentice lineworkers, Braxton Clubb, a Vinton native (top), and Shawn Kelly, an Iowa City native (middle), are teamed up with ECI REC crews operating from Vinton. ECI REC scholarship winner Brady Maurer (bottom), who is in the Powerline Technician program at Northwest Iowa Community College, is serving as summer help from the Independence office.



**THIS SUMMER**, the ECI REC Operations Department is again welcoming new apprentices and summer help. These three young men will join our team of 11 line workers who hit the ground running every day, in all conditions, to maintain the 2,275 miles of line in our service territory. Without their expertise, we would not be able to keep the lights on.

But how do they do it? What kind of training do they receive? To give you an idea, here's a look at the career path line workers follow.


**GETTING STARTED >** The first step in becoming a lineman is earning a Powerline Technical Degree at a local technical or community college, where potential line workers gain entry-level knowledge of the construction, operation, and maintenance of overhead and underground distribution lines.

Students in the Powerline program develop working knowledge of basic electricity. Highly trained instructors walk them through proper use of the tools and equipment utilized in line construction and maintenance. They also get hands-on experience safely installing, changing, transferring, moving, and removing electrical equipment, materials, and accessories.

**APPLYING >** After graduating from the Powerline program, it's time to start the application process. Prospective line workers must produce documentation of their Powerline Technical Degree. They also need to have a valid Class A commercial driver's license with a manual transmission endorsement, along with CPR and first aid certificates. Finally, they need to pass a mandatory physical and drug screening and demonstrate excellent interpersonal communication skills.

## COMPLETING AN APPRENTICESHIP >

Once hired, a prospective line worker becomes a fourth-class apprentice. The Cooperative Line Worker Apprenticeship Program lasts four years. During that time, the apprentices are provided with extensive on-the-job training by senior line foremen. The new line workers will be periodically evaluated and move up the apprentice ranks until, after four years, they are promoted to full line worker.

ECI REC's line workers are committed and highly trained. They are critical to our success, and we are thankful each day for their skills and dedication to keeping rural Iowa bright. To learn more about the process of becoming a line worker, please email us at [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop) or call 877-850-4343. 

## MONEY SMART MEMBER TIP

3

### STEPS to ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1



Identify ways to save energy when using appliances and electronics in your home. Buy **ENERGY STAR®**-rated appliances when possible, and turn off electronics such as computers and gaming consoles when not in use.

2



DIY projects can help you save energy. Caulk around drafty windows, use LED bulbs, and check insulation levels in your home.

3

Ask ECI REC about energy-saving programs! Call Director of Member Service Adam Albertsen at 877-850-4343, ext. 503.





## End-of-Session Remarks From Iowa's Electric Cooperatives

*a Looking Out for You feature*

**REDUCING FILING PAPERWORK** and protecting the safety of line workers were two major electric cooperative priorities that were accomplished in the Iowa General Assembly this year.

**Streamlined reporting** > Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) Board Chairman Steve Seidl praised Iowa legislators for their efforts to enact bipartisan, common-sense regulatory relief in Senate File 331, which eliminated costly and duplicative energy efficiency reporting requirements. "Streamlining the regulation and reporting system is a great way to let our cooperative employees spend more time delivering energy efficiency solutions to members and less time filling out paperwork," explained Seidl. "This is the type of work that constituents don't hear much about, but it makes a positive difference in our ability to deliver affordable and reliable power."

**Parity for geothermal** > The IAEC also supported legislation to bring parity and fairness to the Iowa Code sections on property tax exemptions by adding an exemption from increased property tax value for installation of geothermal energy systems. "We support an all-of-the-above energy strategy, and that includes support of geothermal energy. HF 614 provided a property tax exemption, not a tax credit, to bring parity with other renewable energy sources," explained Seidl. Unfortunately, while the Iowa Legislature did pass bills like Senate File 505 that will have more immediate impacts on the General Fund, House File 614 did not make its way to the governor's desk. The bill did receive approval from the House Ways and Means Committee by a vote of 24-0 and will be eligible for debate again in 2018. "We will be back next year on this issue and hope the Legislature will fix the tax imbalance that geothermal faces in Iowa," said Seidl.

**IAEC recognition** > House Resolution 14 celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, highlighting the

achievements and importance of rural electrification in Iowa. "Rural electric cooperatives are dedicated to improving the lives of rural Iowans. We believe this today in 2017 just as strongly as our founders believed it in 1942," noted Seidl. "We thank the General Assembly for taking the time to recognize our ongoing efforts to empower local communities."

**Iowa Energy Center oversight** > Finally, the IAEC also supported legislation contained in the economic development budget to move the Iowa Energy Center to the Iowa Economic Development Authority to achieve better accountability and remove duplication in a 30-year-old program. According to Seidl, "This move will ensure more oversight and less administrative costs for a program that is funded by utility ratepayers, including electric cooperative members. The idea to bring the Energy Center into alignment with the IEDA's Energy Office was envisioned in the Iowa Energy Plan and will allow for a better refocus of priorities." Turn to page five for the complete story.

**Roadway safety** > Efforts to increase the safety of electric utility line workers were successfully realized in legislation that added electric utility vehicles to Iowa's "move over or slow down" law. House File 314, signed by the governor on April 20, clarified the definition of a utility vehicle in the Iowa Code. This will provide a platform for an upcoming public awareness campaign and increased efforts to highlight this issue in driver training programs. 🚚



# MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN

When you approach police officers,  
firefighters, utility crews, or any other  
emergency responders while driving, move  
over and slow down. It's Iowa law.

**THEY KEEP US SAFE.  
LET'S DO THE SAME FOR THEM.**






The truth is, most—if not all—of the original system was paid for many years ago. But the original infrastructure, such as poles and wires, has likely been replaced. When you have a system that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals. Imagine if you had a car that was 80 years old and was driven all day, every day. By now, either the car would not be operating or every part of the car—from the tires to the engine—would have been replaced many times. The same is true for utility infrastructure. While poles and wires generally have a lifespan of 30-40 years, some may not last as long due to a variety of conditions. For example, a major ice storm can cause power lines to snap and poles to break, regardless of their age.

Paying for an electric cooperative system can be compared to paying for your home. Over many years or decades, the original tract of land and the physical property are paid for in full. But infrastructure updates—such as a new furnace, air conditioner, windows, and roof—are required, not to mention updates to appliances, carpeting, flooring, and paint. Consider how inefficient it would be to heat your home with an 80-year-old furnace. Think of the additional money you'd spend each month due to its inefficiency instead of replacing

it with a new model. The same logic applies to ECI REC as we need to replace vehicles and equipment over the years to serve you best. Aside from the costs of hard assets at ECI REC, there are also the costs of property taxes, insurance, regular maintenance, and staffing that contribute to our overall system costs.

The original electric cooperative infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What's in place today is an improved distribution system that allows us to meet increasing demands for kilowatt-hours in an efficient manner. Not only has the need for electricity increased, our processes now result in reduced outage times. We also work to extend the life of infrastructure through maintenance at regular intervals. Poles are routinely tested for termites, and we trim vegetation throughout our system on cycles to maintain a high level of reliability. To balance reliability with affordability, we upgrade our system when and where it makes sense to do so. We balance financing upgrades and replacements with debt and equity so that we can keep your rates affordable while providing power that you can count on for your home or business. 



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## CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: Canon ink cartridges (2), 40 & 41, \$25. Ph: 319-443-4485

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Please email your ad to [classifieds@ecirec.coop](mailto:classifieds@ecirec.coop). Ads for the Sept./Oct. *Heartland Link* must be received by Aug. 1, 2017.

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.

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## Message From CEO Steve Marlow

## Paying for a System That Works Around the Clock

### EAST-CENTRAL IOWA RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

has been around for a long time—80 years to be exact. We've witnessed the many ways electricity has transformed the communities we serve and our rural landscape. Before electricity, today's household tasks were difficult and dangerous. For example, cooking and washing clothes involved a lot of manual labor. Thankfully, practically everything we do is impacted by the ease of electricity.

A lot has changed since electric cooperatives first turned the lights on for rural Iowa. One thing that hasn't changed is our mission to provide electricity to you. Because we've been reliably, efficiently, and affordably delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our members ask why they still need to pay for a system that should have been paid for by now.