

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## STAY SAFE DURING HARVEST SEASON

page 3

Tips for staying safe around electric equipment.

## KEEPING OUR LINE WORKERS SAFE

page 4

Following one simple rule can keep our line workers safe.



## Electric Cooperatives Concerned With Budget Proposal

page 6

Several proposals in the federal budget threaten to handcuff rural families and businesses.

## 2017 YOUTH TOUR RECAP

page 9

Cade Shramek and Macy Arbuckle were sponsored by ECI REC to spend a week in Washington, D.C.



# Big Grove Substation Gets a Facelift

Operations Update on page 3

Photo by Lisa Franck



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**03 HARVEST SAFETY TIPS****04 KEEP LINE WORKERS SAFE****05 WINTER WEATHERIZATION**

Rebates for energy-efficient upgrades

**05 2017-2018 LIHEAP**

Help with heating costs for low-income families

**05 WATTS \$MART WINNERS****06 FEDERAL BUDGET**

Co-ops are watching budget issues

**07 ACRE/FORE**

You can support energy policy

**07 FIRE PREVENTION WEEK****07 OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH****08 BUDGET BILLING**

Combine with SmartHub use and save time

**08 CO-OP CONNECTIONS® DAY**

National flash deals on October 6

**09 STAY OFF THE PEAK****09 RECARE**

Help fellow members by donating

**09 2017 YOUTH TOUR RECAP****10 LOAN FUND**

Cooperative revolving loan fund supports local growth

**10 WATER HEATERS**

ECI REC offers great options

**10 HEAT PLUS RATE**

Available starting October 1

**11 QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS****04 THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY****04 MONEY SMART TIP****11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS****11 CLASSIFIEDS****12 CEO MESSAGE**our members say  
**thank you**

“The Annual Meeting was very enjoyable for me. The student and guest speakers were excellent, the meal was delicious, and the generous gift bag introduced me to some new products. Thank you for everything.” **HELEN KOZLIK**

“Thank you so much for your recent generous donation of large bags of cereal and snacks! Our food pantry clients will enjoy these.” **SHERRY CRAWFORD, VINTON FOOD PANTRY**

## get your newsletter via email



To receive the *Heartland Link* as a PDF in your inbox, fill out the form on the Email Newsletter Signup page at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) by scanning the QR code to the left. We can also stop postal delivery—just indicate that preference as well.

take the  
**member challenge**

1. SAFETY: When you're behind the wheel, keep your eyes on the road and make room for \_\_\_\_\_ workers.

2. LOOKING OUT FOR YOU: Cooperatives have joined others in the power sector each year in asking Congress for robust \_\_\_\_\_ funding to help those in need pay their home heating and cooling bills.

3. ENERGY WISE: \_\_\_\_\_ rates are considerably more stable than gas.

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 October 1. Sixteen names will be drawn from all correct entries. Members will not be allowed to win more than once per calendar year.

last issue's  
**challenge winners**

The following names were drawn from the July/August 2017 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Larry Svestka  
James Hoffman, Jr.  
Patricia Hogan-Burrack  
Jerry Bird  
Eli Raue  
Chelsea People  
Joan Beatty  
Laverne Lentz

Gary Bearbower  
Darwin & Cheryl Funk  
Clifford Schlumbohm  
Patricia Fowlkes  
Marvin Dostal  
Peggy Decker  
James Van Etten  
Ruth Schutterle

**Calendar Notes**

Sept. 4 - Closed  
for Labor Day

Nov. 10 - Closed  
for Veteran's Day

**Contact ECI REC****EMAILS**

[memberservices@ecirec.coop](mailto:memberservices@ecirec.coop)  
(rebates, product sales)

[csr@ecirec.coop](mailto:csr@ecirec.coop)  
(billing, new customers)

**WEB SITE**  
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(closed Saturdays,  
Sundays, and holidays)



**OPERATIONS NEWS  
OUTAGE UPDATES**

[facebook.com/  
eastcentraliowarec](https://facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec)



## COVER STORY

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



*Photos by Lisa Franck*

## BIG GROVE SUBSTATION GETS A FACELIFT >

Big Grove Substation—which is located between Vinton and Van Horne—recently received upgraded breakers. Like many of ECI REC's substations, the hydraulic breakers were upgraded to electronic reclosers, which are safer, more reliable, and more efficient.

## BUILDING PROGRESS >

Construction on the Independence operations center is moving along! In late July, the construction crew got to work on brick-laying the new facility.



**UNDERGROUND UTILITY INSPECTION >** On July 31, Badgerland Utility Solutions, LLC—a Wisconsin company subcontracted by ECI REC contractor OSMOSE—began inspecting the Cooperative's underground utilities. They started with the equipment near the Karr substation in Benton County. Once that inspection is complete, they will move up to Buchanan County to inspect the underground utilities near the Jesup substation. Badgerland will be working in ECI REC's service area through the month of October, inspecting both underground and overhead distribution lines.



*Photos by Lisa Franck*

## FORKLIFT TRAINING >

On July 18, ECI REC line crews brushed up on safe forklift operation and maintenance at a scheduled training session.



*Photos by Mike Adams*

# Stay Safe During Harvest Season

Harvest is an exciting and exhausting time. However, carelessness during harvest can lead to tragic outcomes. This harvest, make sure to take these steps to ensure a safer season:

- Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it's only a few feet. Use care when raising augers, grain truck beds, and other equipment around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
- Pay attention to variables like wind, uneven ground, and shifting weight.
- Stay in the vehicle if you come in contact with a power line. Warn others to stay away and call 911. If there is a fire or imminent risk of a fire, jump off the equipment with your feet together, and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety.

For more information on farm electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

*Image source: Safe Electricity*



# One Simple Rule Can Keep Our Line Workers Safe

a Safety feature

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO** if you approach a utility vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its lights flashing? According to Iowa law, motorists must either slow down or move over...or they could face a \$100 fine.

Iowa has had a Move Over or Slow Down law on the books since 2002. This law simply states that motorists must change lanes or slow down when approaching a stationary emergency, tow, or maintenance vehicle that has activated its flashing lights. Earlier this year, additional legislation that expanded the definition of utility maintenance vehicles to include bucket trucks, garbage trucks, and tow trucks was unanimously approved by the Iowa House and Senate and signed into law by Governor Branstad. With House File 314 in effect as of July 1, East-Central Iowa REC's utility maintenance vehicles



Governor Kim Reynolds and Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg met with line workers at MiEnergy Cooperative in North-Central Iowa on June 16 to learn more about how Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law applies to utility and maintenance vehicles.

are now clearly covered by Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law.

To summarize, as a licensed Iowa driver you are required to move over or slow down when approaching an emergency or maintenance utility vehicle on the side of the road that has activated its flashing lights. As a safety best practice, we encourage you to slow down AND move over every time you approach a vehicle stopped on the shoulder.

To help spread this important safety message and protect our line workers from serious injury or death, the electric cooperatives of Iowa have

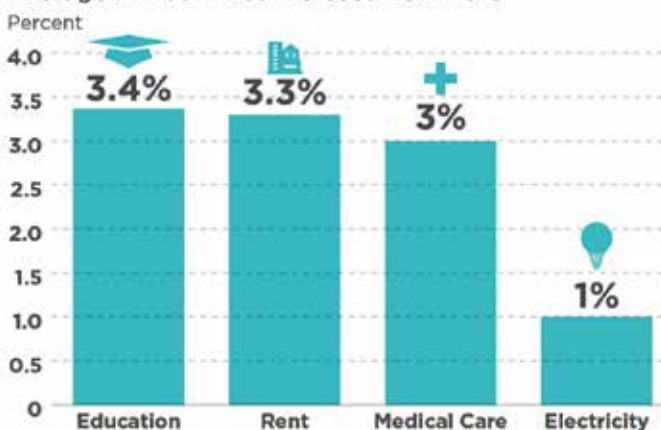
partnered with other utility groups in the state to develop a public awareness campaign. We're urging drivers to take an online pledge to obey Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law at [www.MoveOverIowa.com](http://www.MoveOverIowa.com). Once you enter your name and zip code on the website and take the pledge, you have the option to share your pledge on Facebook or Twitter and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

When you're behind the wheel, keep your eyes on the road and make room for maintenance workers. Their jobs are dangerous enough already.

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

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 2011-2016



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

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

### MONEY SMART MEMBER TIP

Cooler temps will be here soon! No matter what kind of heating system you have in your home, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. Contact a licensed professional to inspect your system before the winter chill arrives.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



# ECI REC Weatherization Incentives

an Energy Wise feature

## Make upgrades now to save this winter

### Requirements (with or without LIHEAP)

- » Must have electric heat and/or central air conditioning (homes with natural gas heat do not qualify).
- » Home must be built prior to 1996.
- » Must be an upgrade to an existing home (new additions do not qualify).
- » Project cost must be \$150 or more (labor costs for self-installed projects cannot be included).

### Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation—60% up to \$600
- » Wall Insulation—60% up to \$600
- » Foundation Insulation—60% up to \$600
- » Infiltration Control—60% up to \$200
- » Duct Insulation/Sealing—60% up to \$200

Maximum incentive per home—\$2,200

### Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation—15% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation—15% up to \$150

Maximum incentive per home—\$300

### LIHEAP Qualified (See LIHEAP weatherization income guidelines to the right)

### Electric Heat (with or without air conditioning)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation—80% up to \$800
- » Wall Insulation—80% up to \$800
- » Foundation Insulation—80% up to \$800
- » Infiltration Control—80% up to \$200
- » Duct Insulation/Sealing—80% up to \$200

Maximum incentive per home—\$2,800

### Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation—20% up to \$150
- » Wall Insulation—20% up to \$150

Maximum incentive per home—\$300

# State Releases 2017-2018 LIHEAP Requirements

an Energy Wise update

**THE LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)** was established to help qualifying, low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing. LIHEAP applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and also serve as an application for the Weatherization Assistance Program.

If you are not sure where to apply, please call your local community action agency (CAA) or write to: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319. A list of CAAs can be found at: [humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply](http://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply).

## HOW TO APPLY FOR LIHEAP

### WHEN TO APPLY

- » Elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled: October 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018
- » All other households: November 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018

### WHAT TO TAKE

- » Proof of income (for all household members age 19 and over)
- » Check stubs from the previous 30 days, award letter from Social Security, or 2016 tax return
- » Social Security numbers for all household members (documentation required)
- » Recent heat bill
- » Recent electric bill

### WAGE EARNERS

- » Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

### FIXED INCOME

- » This income may include: Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, veterans' assistance, unemployment insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

### SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS

- » Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

### FIP RECIPIENTS

- » Please bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

*If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified.*

### INCOME MAXIMUMS

Household Size	1 Mo. Gross Income	Annual Gross Income
1	\$1,759	\$21,105
2	\$2,368	\$28,420
3	\$2,978	\$35,735
4	\$3,588	\$43,050
5	\$4,197	\$50,365
6	\$4,807	\$57,680
7	\$5,416	\$64,995
8	\$6,026	\$72,310
<i>For households with more than eight members, add \$610 / \$7,315 for each additional member.</i>		

## Announcing...Our Watts \$mart Contest Winners!

an Energy Wise update

In July, ECI REC offered members who signed up to receive the monthly Watts \$mart e-tips newsletter a chance to win a Kill A Watt electricity meter. Out of the 27 entries, we randomly drew the names of 10 winners:

- |                 |                    |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| • Michael Crow  | • Barbara Petersen | • Clark Crisman | • James Mohlis     |
| • Emma Venneman | • Ray Kamin        | • Ryan Coleman  | • David L. Janssen |
|                 |                    | • Steven Forney | • Ronnie Wilson    |

Thank you to everyone who participated!

Interested in signing up for the Watts \$mart e-tips newsletter? Click on the Watts \$mart button located at the bottom of the ECI REC homepage.



# Electric Cooperatives Concerned With President's Budget Proposal

*a Looking Out for You article*

Every year, the president sends Congress a proposal for funding the government during the upcoming fiscal year. Congress considers this proposal as it weighs its own budget priorities.

The president's budget request for fiscal year 2018 includes several proposals that threaten to handcuff rural families and businesses. While Congress isn't required to adopt these proposals, electric cooperatives have an obligation to stand up for the interests of their members by alerting our elected leaders to our concerns.

That's why East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative and other co-ops have been vocal in Washington about several areas of the president's budget that would hurt America's electric cooperatives and their 42 million members.

## Rural economic development

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program provides loans, grants, and guarantees to support economic development and many essential services in rural communities. But the president's budget proposes to eliminate funding for the Rural Business Service, including the Rural Cooperative Development Grant, Rural Energy for America, and Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) programs.

## Power Marketing Administrations

The federal government provides clean, low-cost electricity to more than 600 cooperatives from federal hydropower projects operated by four Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs). But the president's budget proposal suggests selling off the transmission assets of three PMAs. This would jeopardize affordable, reliable power for more than 100 million people and have a devastating impact on rural economies. Both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have joined cooperatives in speaking out against this proposal.

## Low-income energy assistance

The Department of Health and Human Services proposes eliminating the Low-Income Home Energy

Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a valuable tool that electric cooperative consumers use to help pay their energy bills in times of severe weather or economic crises. Cooperatives have joined others in the power sector each year in asking Congress for robust LIHEAP funding to help those in need pay their home heating and cooling bills. The program has had a strong track record of success since 1981.

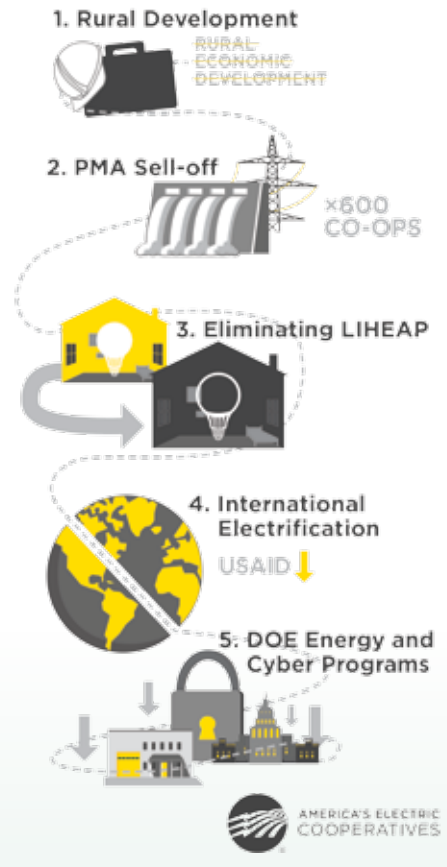
## International electrification

The president's budget proposes a 32% cut to the U.S. Agency for International Development, a major funding source for electric cooperatives' work to promote electrification in other countries. The pressure to cut rural electrification programs could both halt ongoing successful efforts to provide millions more people access to reliable and affordable electricity and stall the growth of global trading partners.

## Department of Energy programs

Four Department of Energy (DOE) applied energy research and development (R&D) programs are targeted for a \$2.15 billion cut under the president's budget. Among those, funding for solar energy would be cut from \$238 million to \$134 million, reducing the potential for future cooperative solar R&D projects. Further


## 5 FEDERAL BUDGET ISSUES CO-OPS ARE WATCHING



cuts to DOE cybersecurity programs would reduce electric sector coordination and collaboration with the Department's Office of Electricity Delivery.

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), summed the budget proposal up this way:

A healthy rural America can be the rising tide that lifts the nation's economy and the standard of living in countless communities. Rather than shifting funds away from critical programs that have a record of success, the administration should be working with co-ops and other stakeholders to jumpstart rural America's economic engines.


That's the message NRECA and its member cooperatives, including ECI REC, are delivering to federal policymakers. 



# Your Support Can Help Influence Energy Policy

a *Looking Out For You* article

**TODAY MORE THAN EVER**, what is happening in Des Moines, Iowa, and Washington, D.C., can impact your cost of power and its reliability. Through political action committees (PACs), members can support the campaigns of those officials who have shown themselves supportive of our goals. Because it is illegal for cooperative funds to be contributed to election campaigns, these PACs rely on donations from cooperative employees, directors, and members like you.

The two PACs members can consider donating to are the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE), which sends funds to candidates for federal elections, and the Friends of Rural Electrification (FORE), which supports candidates running for state office. Sign up today by filling out the form below. 

## Yes, I will support ACRE and FORE.

☐ I will make a one-time contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_. My check is enclosed.

*Make checks payable to REC Transmittal Account.*

☐ I will contribute monthly. Please add \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month to my electric bill.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_








Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: ECI REC | PO Box 248  
Urbana, IA 52345



How fast does fire move? Very fast. You could have less than 2 minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds.

### 7 steps to practicing your escape plan

 <p>1 Draw a map of your home. Include all doors and windows.</p>	 <p>2 Find two ways out of every room.</p>	 <p>3 Make sure doors and windows are not blocked.</p>	 <p>4 Choose an outside meeting place in front of your home.</p>
 <p>5 Push the test button to sound the smoke alarm.</p>	 <p>6 Practice your drill with everyone in the home.</p>	 <p>7 Get outside to your meeting place.</p>	

For more information about escape planning, visit:  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov) and [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).



Cooperatives build trust, community, jobs, and a better world. As a member of ECI REC, you are part of something special. Join us as we celebrate National Cooperative Month this October.



# Get Smart: Combine SmartHub and Budget Billing

*a Keeping the Lights On article*



Looking for a way to make payments easier and access your crucial account and usage information quickly? **SmartHub** is the answer.

Using **SmartHub**, ECI REC members can quickly view and file bills using any computer or smartphone. After registering, you can receive your electronic bill via email.

You can also use **SmartHub** in combination with direct payment and budget billing to significantly streamline your month-to-month financial planning. With direct payment, you pay automatically each month by electronic direct payment from a bank account or credit card. The direct payment form can be found online at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop).

Then, add budget billing so you know what amount you will pay each month. Your monthly payment is calculated based on your 12-month usage history or the usage history of the past occupants of your residence. Accounts are periodically reviewed to ensure that payments match actual usage so you do not face a large debit or credit at the end of the year.

Mail completed form to: ECI REC Billing | PO Box 248 | Urbana, IA 52345-0248

There are several ways you can enroll in budget billing:

- » Complete the budget billing form below and mail it in
- » Email: [csr@ecirec.coop](mailto:csr@ecirec.coop)
- » Make an inquiry via SmartHub, under the Contact Us section
- » Call our toll-free number: 877-850-4343
- » Visit our Urbana headquarters building

## YES, tell me my monthly budget amount.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ECI REC Account No.(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stay in the Know During an Outage Via SmartHub

ECI REC's online outage map, which offers near real-time information to members during an outage, is accessible from the SmartHub app. SmartHub powers ECI REC's online payment platform. For updates during an outage, download the SmartHub app today for free after registering with SmartHub.

"Making the outage map available on smartphones, tablets, and other mobile, battery-powered devices is one way ECI REC strives to make your account information and other ECI REC-related resources available 24/7, even during an outage," said CEO Steve Marlow.



Android users:  
Scan to download  
the SmartHub app



Apple users:  
Scan to download  
the SmartHub app

Download the SmartHub app from the iTunes or the Android app store so you can access your account 24/7 for updates.

## CO-OP CONNECTIONS® CARD MORE TO CELEBRATE ON OCTOBER 6!

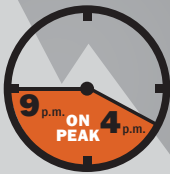
On Oct. 6, 2017, ECI REC invites you to take advantage of the benefits the Co-op Connections Card provides by participating in the second annual National Co-op Connections Day, sponsored by Touchstone Energy®. Co-op Connections day will feature national flash deals, announced on [connections.coop](http://connections.coop).

Celebrate this money-saving program and receive even more benefits when you use The One Card That Does It All® at participating national and local retailers! If you need a new card, download the Co-op Connections app, print one from [connections.coop](http://connections.coop), or call ECI REC at 877-850-4343.





Switch your thinking and  
**TAKE A LOAD OFF THE PEAK**




## Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours

*an Energy Wise reminder*

Peak hours are the busiest times for your local electric cooperative since many people are using electricity at the same time. In addition, it costs your co-op more to generate electricity when demand soars during peak periods—and the cost of your electricity may also rise. Obviously, using less electricity during peak periods can save your co-op—and you—money.

Here's how you can help during peak hours, which generally are on the coldest winter days between 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

- » Shift household chores and activities away from peak periods. Wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed, for instance.
- » Use the most energy-efficient appliances you have. Your microwave oven, for example, uses considerably less energy than your stove or cook-top.
- » If you're buying a new appliance, make sure you get a highly efficient one. Look for ENERGY STAR® labels when you're evaluating different models.
- » Be aware of your energy consumption and try to get in the habit of using energy efficiently year-round.

Use the energy you need, but use it wisely! You'll help your co-op avoid building expensive new power plants—and that, in turn, will help keep your electric rates stable. 


## 2016-2017 RECare Donations

*a Community Connected update*

**CONTRIBUTING TO RECare**, a program that distributes funds to low-income energy consumers in Benton and Buchanan Counties, is an easy way to help others. The funds donated by ECI REC members are given out through community action agencies and help pay heating bills or weatherization costs for members who are in need.

ECI REC would like to thank all the members who are currently giving to others in their communities. Even a small amount can help those less fortunate.

From July 2016 to June 2017, 68 members contributed to RECare through monthly contributions. Three members contributed via one-time donations. In total, these members contributed \$5,265. These donations assisted 13 members, with an average of \$413.22 going to each family.

Help ECI REC reach our goal of exceeding that number of participants in 2017-2018! To sign up for RECare or make a one-time donation, complete and return the form located on the Member Programs page of the ECI REC website, [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop). 



Scan to fill out the RECare form online.



**Members gave \$5,265 in 2016-17!**

Photo by IAEC



## Iowa Teens Travel to Washington, D.C., for 2017 Youth Tour


*a Community Connected article*

**FROM JUNE 9-15**, 38 high school students representing Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives traveled to Washington, D.C., joining more than 1,800 other students from around the nation for the 2017 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. For more than 50 years, the Youth Tour has been giving students the opportunity to tour the nation's capital.

This year, Cade Shramek and Macy Arbuckle represented and were sponsored by East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative. Cade attends Prairie High School and is the son of Don and Lora Shramek of Amana. Macy is the daughter of Jim and Carol Arbuckle of Vinton. She is homeschooled.

Along with the other Youth Tour students, Cade and Macy participated in leadership training, engaged in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jumpstarted their national peer network, learned about electric cooperatives, and toured Washington, D.C.

"The Youth Tour is the highlight of the summer for many students from Iowa, and we're proud to send 38 of our best and brightest to our nation's capital this year to participate," said Chuck Soderberg, Executive Vice President of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "These students gained a first-hand understanding of the legislative process and made connections with other student leaders from across the country that will last a lifetime. We look forward to continuing the Youth Tour tradition for another 50 years."

Students apply and are selected for the Youth Tour program by their local electric cooperatives. Nearly 50,000 students have participated in this program over the decades. For more information on the tour and the application process, visit [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop). 



# Revolving Loan Fund Supports Local Communities

by Steve Marlow, CEO | a Community Connected article



Image source: cooperativemedia.com

**BUSINESS OWNERS TAKE NOTE**—your project may be eligible for a loan through the ECI REC revolving loan fund. Anyone may apply for a loan for any community or economic development project that benefits the rural area, such as new or expanding private businesses, non-profit groups, and city or county governments. Loan recipients are not required to take electricity service from ECI REC.

The Loan Review Committee and Cooperative's Board consider the financial need of the project; the probability of success; the benefits of the project to the rural area, including number of jobs to be created or retained; diversification of the economy; quality job creation in terms of pay scale and benefits package; and community development projects and improvements to the community infrastructure.

Please contact ECI REC's CEO Steve Marlow by calling 877-850-4343 for more information on loan requirements and terms. 🌱

## ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS INCLUDE:

- Land purchases
- Machinery and equipment
- Fixed assets
- Buildings

## INELIGIBLE USES INCLUDE:

- Speculation land purchases
- Payments to owners or equity investors
- Debt refinancing
- Projects lacking economic development potential

# Electric Water Heaters Offer Many Benefits

an Energy Wise feature

## ARE YOU IN THE MARKET FOR A NEW WATER HEATER? If

you already have an electric unit, you know the benefits; but if you have a propane (gas) water heater, or are

contemplating one, here are a few points to ponder.

**Safety** – An electric water heater requires no venting, no gas line, and offers no CO<sub>2</sub> concerns.

**Space** – The water heater space allotment in your home often determines what will work best. An electric water heater installation requires zero clearance.

**Maintenance** – Electric water heaters are very low maintenance; there are no moving parts and no pilot lights to be concerned with.

**Price** – An energy-efficient (rating .95 and above) 50-gallon electric water heater will cost a family of four about \$40 per month to operate. Electric rates are considerably more stable than gas. For example, East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative's price per kilowatt-hour has increased 4.6% (less than a half a cent) over the past 10 years. Installation costs are also considerably less with an electric water heater.

**Energy Efficiency** – Consider the ultimate in electric water heating with an air source heat pump water heater. With an efficiency rating of at least 2.4 (240%), they are the most efficient water heaters on the market today.

**Incentives** – Buy a new, energy-efficient electric water heater and receive a \$50 rebate. Receive a \$650 rebate for the purchase of an air source heat pump water heater.

**Still can't decide?** Give us a call 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. 🌱



Image source: Rheem Manufacturing Company

# REMINDER: Heat Plus Rate Offers Winter Savings

ECI REC's Heat Plus rate will take effect October 1, 2017, and is available through May 31, 2018. Even with propane prices on the decline, our Heat Plus rate of **.0485 cents/kWh** remains a great value for members using primarily electric heating. Call 877-850-4343 or visit [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) to see if you qualify for the Heat Plus rate.



Image source: thinkstock.com - Mikko Lemola



to computers at the Cooperative headquarters, will improve the reliability of our system. The new technology allows us to detect problems more quickly and locate outages more precisely. In some cases, we will be able to fix the problem before members know their power has been out.

AMI technology is also a key component of the electronic grid, or the “smart grid,” which is a transmission and distribution network that can track the flow of electricity with great precision and efficiency. ECI REC has considered the smart grid within our long-term strategic plan, making sure our SCADA system and other technology upgrades were AMI-compatible when updates were needed. AMI systems and the smart grid are self-healing in the sense that if service is interrupted, ECI REC will know right away because certain components of the grid will stop sending data. By ensuring the components of the grid—from substations to switches to home electric meters—are capable of two-

way communication, ECI REC can manage distribution more efficiently, be proactive about maintenance, and respond to outages faster.

Finally, the AMI meters provide information about power usage that will help members understand how and when they are using electricity. Armed with this information, ECI REC customer service representatives will be in a better position to help members address billing inquiries.

Our members’ kilowatt-hour rates will not change. Your first bill following the installation will be labeled “Meter Exchange” in the Bill Type section. Members will be able to see the readings and usage from their old and new meters. The Cooperative will send out an installation schedule, which will also be available on our website. You can find more information about the meters on the website’s FAQ page.

At East-Central Iowa REC, taking advantage of new technologies is just one more way we look out for our members. 🌱

## Statement of Non-Discrimination

East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; by fax to 202-690-7442; or by email to [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

## YOUR BOARD



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## CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

WANTED: Good-quality, used upright vacuum cleaner. No junk, please. PH: 563-774-2041

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

## 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 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Local phone: 319-443-4343  
Toll free: 877-850-4343  
Fax: 319-443-4359  
Email: [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto: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](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov)  
(in subject area, note customer service)

Mail: Customer Service, Iowa Utilities Board, 1375 Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

**ALWAYS  
CALL  
BEFORE YOU  
DIG**

**IOWA 811  
ONE CALL<sup>SM</sup>**

**800-292-8989**



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East-Central Iowa REC is an equal opportunity employer.

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.

## Members get connected at [www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop)



### 24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub

See account information at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop), [smarthub.coop](http://smarthub.coop) or download the app.



### Outage Center & Map

View current outages via SmartHub or at [outages.ecirec.coop](http://outages.ecirec.coop).



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### Call Before You Dig

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### Iowa Rural Power

Join grassroots advocates for Iowa's electric cooperatives. Visit [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).



## Message From CEO Steve Marlow

## New Meters Will Help Us Serve You Better

**OVER THE NEXT 15 MONTHS**, East-Central Iowa REC will be installing new advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) technology to increase the efficiency and reliability of our electric system.

Improving the efficiency of operations and electricity delivery will help us keep down costs. By installing AMI technology, the Cooperative will have the ability to read meters remotely from the office, saving the cost associated with hiring a contractor or sending our line crews out to gather readings. As a result, members will save money and we will lower our carbon footprint. The ability to instantaneously read meters directly from the office will also eliminate the need to estimate time spent uploading over 10,000 meter readings into the billing system.

In addition to reducing operational costs, the new meters, which can receive and send information