

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## HURRICANE HELP

page 3

ECI REC team returns home after helping restore power.



## APPLY FOR YOUTH TOUR

page 6

Earn a free trip to Washington, D.C.!



## UNCLAIMED PATRONAGE

page 8

Help us locate former members with uncashed checks.



# Ops Team Moves In

Story on page 3

Photo by Lisa Franck



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# our members say thank you

“I just wanted to drop you a note and express our sincere gratitude for your assistance in the aftermath of last week’s storm. In particular, please extend our thanks to employees Ben Donnelly, Braxton Clubb, Janel Grover, and Cole Berger. Without their help, timely restoration of service would have been extremely difficult.” **Paul Foxwell, Executive Vice President/General Manager of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative**

“Thank you East-Central Iowa REC for sponsoring and donating trophies and banners for our achievements and showmanship during the ...

Benton County Fair.” **Erin Cantrell, Garrett Coffland, and Steiger Manson**

Buchanan County Fair.” **Lauren Beyer, Cynthia Hamlett, and Luke Tempus**

“Thank you for your continued support of the Murphy Memorial! ... Thanks to your generosity, we were able to give away nearly \$14,000 to local charities.” **The Murphy Family**

## Calendar Notes

### HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Fri. 11/10 - Veterans Day  
Thurs./Fri. 11/23 & 24 - Thanksgiving  
Mon./Tues. 12/25 & 26 - Christmas  
Mon. 1/1 - New Year's Day

## Contact ECI REC

### EMAILS

memberservices@ecirec.coop  
(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop  
(billing, new customers)

### WEB SITE

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PHONE  
319-443-4343


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877-850-4343

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### HOURS

Monday-Friday  
Office: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

 OPERATIONS NEWS  
OUTAGE UPDATES

facebook.com/  
eastcentraliowarec

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## take the member challenge

1. COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE: The AMI system supports our goal of making our electric distribution system \_\_\_\_\_ and more reliable.
2. ENERGY WISE: Find up to 50% \_\_\_\_\_ discounts on ENERGY STAR® CFL and LED screw-in lamps (including fixtures with screw-in adapters).
3. SAFETY: Keep supplies in your emergency kit for \_\_\_\_ in preparation for bad weather.

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

## challenge winners last issue's

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

Patricia Delong

Orland Fish

Richard Goedken

James Green

John Grover

Myron Henkel

Kevin & Bev Hermsen

Robert & Cynthia Hill

Harold Maser

Raymond Michael

Harold Munson

Larry Nabholz

Nicholas Nie

Dennis Sullivan

Larry Thompson

Henry Zeien



# Ops Team Moves In

New Independence operations building now serving members

*a Keeping the Lights On update*

**EAST-CENTRAL IOWA REC** celebrated the completion of a new, modern operations facility in Independence with a ribbon cutting on October 18. Representatives of the Independence Chamber of Commerce and Chamber members were on hand for tours. An open house for ECI REC members will be held in the spring.

The 17,400-square-foot building replaces a 66-year-old structure that was no longer capable of supporting business operations. “Small shop doors limited the size of the bucket trucks we could store here, and the flat roof was a continuous maintenance issue,” explained CEO Steve Marlow.

Nine full-time employees work out of the Independence building, which provides operational service to members in the northern part of ECI REC’s service territory. The building is fully capable of serving as a backup facility should the Urbana headquarters building become non-operational. ♻️



*Photo by Lisa Franck*

# ECI REC Line Personnel Return Home After Helping With Hurricane Recovery

*a Keeping the Lights On feature*

**ON SEPTEMBER 18**, 40 line personnel from Iowa’s electric cooperatives returned to their home state after spending one week helping with recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Irma. ECI REC’s Travis Schellhorn and Ben Donnelly were stationed in Nahunta, Georgia, where they helped Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation crews clean up debris and restore power to cooperative members.

Travis and Ben focused on re-energizing lines and clearing downed trees. The duo worked near the Florida-Georgia border on September 13 with a group from Linn County REC, which is based in Marion, Iowa. The next day, Travis and Ben traveled to Kingsland, Georgia, to team up with Prairie Energy Cooperative of Clarion, Iowa. Before the crews arrived, approximately 7,800 Okefenokee REMC members in the Kingsland area were without power.

Power was restored to the service territory more quickly than anticipated. Travis and Ben were very thankful for the hospitality they were shown by Okefenokee REMC personnel. ♻️



*In September, line workers from Iowa’s electric cooperatives held a safety meeting (above) before heading out in a convoy bound for Georgia. Their work was critical to helping restore power sooner than projected to residents affected by Hurricane Irma.*

*Photos courtesy of Access Energy Cooperative*





## BUILDING A SMARTER COOPERATIVE



Scan to visit the smart meter section at [www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop).

# Frequently Asked Questions About Smart Meters and AMI

Smart meter installation is the next step in maximizing the capability of the technology ECI REC has been putting in place over the past decade. One of ECI REC's main objectives as we switch from analog to smart meters is to provide our members with the information they need to easily navigate the transition. To that end, we have put together the following list of Frequently Asked Questions about smart meters and the AMI system.

If you have additional questions not covered by the FAQ list, please call or email the ECI REC team. More information on the new system can also be found in the other articles in the smart meter series on our website.

### OVERVIEW

**What is AMI?** Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is a meter-reading system that allows two-way communication between smart meters and electricity providers.

**Why is ECI REC switching to AMI smart meters?** The AMI system supports our goal of making our electric distribution system safer and more reliable. With smart meter technology, ECI REC will be able to read meters remotely from the office. As a result, we will no longer have to hire a contractor or send out line crews to gather readings, which will result in a cost savings of approximately \$175,000 per year and lower our carbon footprint.

#### What do smart meters do?

For each account, smart meters record an electronic kWh reading, the date and time of energy usage, and overall peak demand. They also record the date and time of light blinks, the length of power outages, and whether they have rotated backwards or been tampered with.

**How do smart meters collect and transmit data?** Smart meters collect and store energy usage data. This is sent to ECI REC's servers and updated

several times each day. Once the data has been transmitted and validated, it is made available on the member portal, SmartHub.

The smart meters communicate with the computer system through a wireless radio frequency (RF) network set up by Elster/Honeywell, our meter vendor.

**Will my smart meter automatically notify ECI REC when my power goes out?** While your smart meter will help us verify the root of the problem, it will not immediately notify the Cooperative when an outage occurs. When you have an outage or emergency situation, you should always call us at 877-850-4343.

**Can members choose not to receive a new meter?** No. This is a system-wide upgrade program, and all residential and commercial meters will be changed out.

### COST AND BILLING

**How much will the AMI system cost ECI REC members?** There will be no additional costs to our members, and no rate change is anticipated in association with the project. If a rate change is required, we believe the long-term membership benefits will offset it.

#### When will my meter be read?

For billing purposes, the meters will be read at midnight on the last day of the month. The monthly billing cycle will remain the same. Bills will be mailed around the tenth day of each month and are due on the first day of the next month.

**What do I do if I think my bill is reporting more kWh usage than normal, or I think my meter is not working correctly?** Contact ECI REC right away to discuss billing concerns. Smart meters are more accurate than analog or mechanical meters. The new meters have been tested and meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) regulations and conform to all applicable standards and regulations set forth by the Iowa Utilities Board.

### INSTALLATION

**Who will change out the meters?** Chapman Metering will perform all meter changes.

#### When and where will the smart meter installation begin?

ECI REC has an installation schedule in place for all areas of its distribution system. The first meters will be changed in January/February 2018, with an estimated completion date of fourth-quarter 2018—pending weather, adequate staffing, and inventory supply.

**Will ECI REC notify me prior to installation?** ECI REC will send out postcards four weeks prior to the meter installations. We will also notify members with a phone call the week prior to installation. Smart meter deployment maps and information will be available on ECI REC's website.

**Do I need to be present during the meter change?** No. However, if a circumstance such as a locked gate, pets in the yard, or other obstruction prevents Chapman Metering from exchanging your meter, a red door hanger will be left to notify you of the problem; please follow the instructions on it and contact us as soon as possible to arrange a follow-up visit.

**How will I know if my meter has been changed?** Chapman Metering will leave a door hanger on your door.

**Will my electric service be interrupted during the meter change?** You will experience a short disruption of power, possibly five minutes, during the meter change. Chapman Metering personnel will try to provide advance warning by knocking on your door before performing the change. If the meter base or other wiring is damaged and fails inspection,





the disruption of power may be longer as necessary repairs are made. We will work with businesses to minimize any inconvenience.

**What if I have a separate heat meter?** You will also receive a new smart meter for your heat meter, and your Heat Plus rate will continue.

### SECURITY

**Can anyone other than ECI REC read the new meters?** The manufacturer has incorporated security features and encryption technology into the meter. While the meter display is visible so members can check their consumption, the meters are sealed and the information and data stored within them can only be accessed with special software.

Though these measures make it highly unlikely, a very sophisticated “bad actor” could possibly access information from the Cooperative’s system. However, smart meters report any tampering attempts to the Cooperative within seconds.

**Can ECI REC disconnect power using the smart meter technology?** Single-phase residential meters will have a disconnect switch that is capable of remotely disconnecting the

service. This switch may be used for member-requested disconnects and safety measures. For example, a meter may be disconnected if there is danger from a fire in the area or a downed line.

**Could the new meters impact my health?** To safeguard the health of the public, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) establishes requirements for acceptable RF exposure limits. Elster meters comply with and exceed these requirements, as well as global international requirements. Because of their outdoor installation and infrequent signal transmission, Elster meters also present significantly lower RF exposure than many other products used daily by consumers without concern, such as cell phones and wireless routers.

**Will the AMI service interfere with my radio, telephone, cell phone, computer, television, wireless internet access, invisible fence, or other electronic equipment?** No. The transmitting device operates in compliance with FCC regulations to avoid interference with other electronic devices. The AMI system only operates for short periods of time each day at a low power frequency. 🌱

# Sport Court Project Supported by ECI REC



**Dave Sproull accepts a check from ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow to support the development of an outdoor multipurpose recreational court by the Community and Commercial Club of Winthrop. The asphalt court will be used for tennis, pickle ball, and basketball.**

## Powering Safely During an Outage

from NRECA's Straight Talk



**THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS** left without power after devastating hurricanes this year has proven how crucial portable generators can be. Proper generator use will keep you safe during a stressful time. To protect yourself and the linemen who work to restore your power after an outage, follow these guidelines:

- » Never plug a portable generator directly into one of your home’s outlets unless you have had a licensed electrician install a transfer switch in your home. If you don’t have a transfer switch, the generator can backfeed along power lines, which can electrocute a lineman working on those lines.
- » Generators create carbon monoxide, so they must go outside in a dry area at least 15 feet away from your home’s vents, windows, and doors. Attached garages with an open door don’t count—the carbon monoxide can still seep indoors and poison inhabitants.
- » Plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords, but don’t overload it. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for maximum load.
- » Shut off the generator before refueling, or a fire could start—and it’s a good idea to have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

Safety is a top priority at ECI REC, for our employees and members alike. Contact us at 877-850-4343 if you’d like to learn more about how to properly install and use a portable generator. 🌱



# High School Seniors: Bank Bucks for College

*a Community Connected message*

**ECI REC HAS DISTRIBUTED** over 140 scholarships to graduating high school seniors since 2007 through its Scholarship Program. In 2018, the Cooperative will award up to ten students \$1,000 scholarships to continue their education in college in any field. Up to two \$1,000 scholarships are offered to those who are accepted to and attend the Powerline Technology Program at Northwest Iowa Community College.

“Concern for the community is one of the principles our Cooperative is built on,” said ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow. “Investing in the education of our youth is an investment in the future of our communities.”

To be eligible for scholarships, students must have parents or legal guardians who are members of ECI REC. Applications can be downloaded at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop). Look for the scholarship button on the lower left of the home page. **The deadline for applications is March 7, 2018.** If you have further questions, email us at [scholarships@ecirec.coop](mailto:scholarships@ecirec.coop) or phone us toll free at 877-850-4343.

## Apply Now for 2018 Youth Tour to D.C.

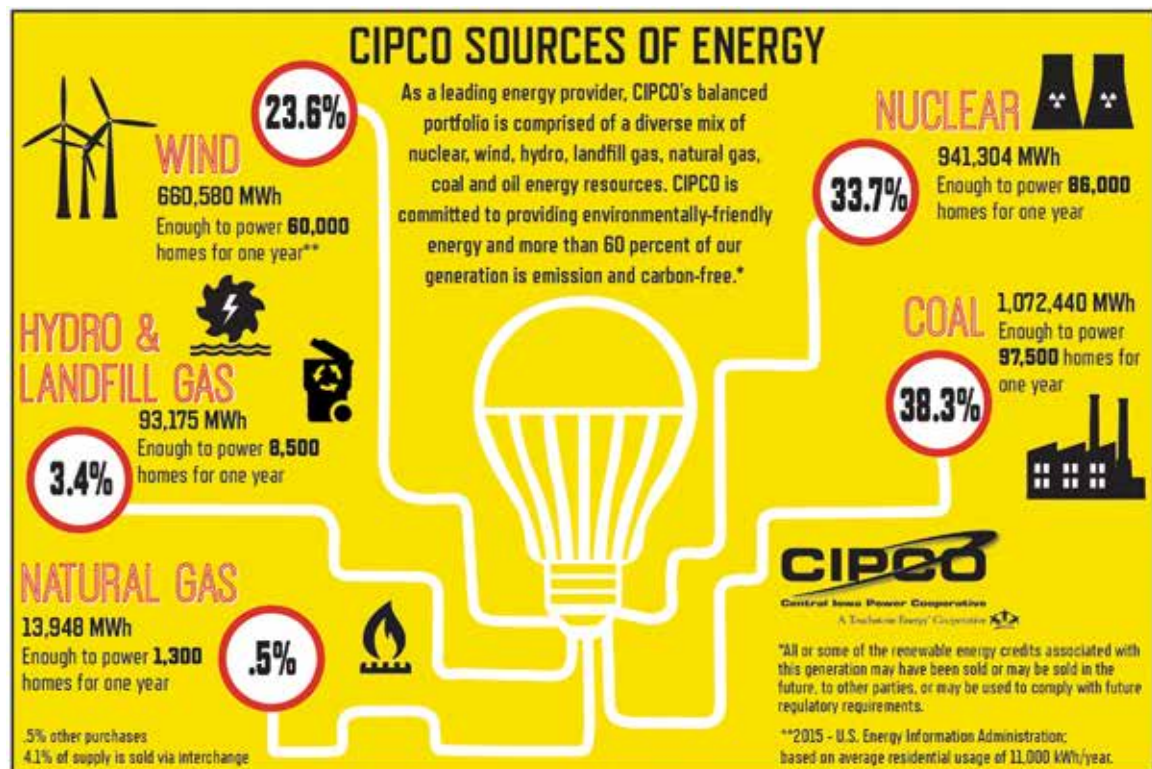
*a Community Connected message*

**EACH YEAR, ECI REC** pays the way for two high school juniors to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The 2018 event will take place June 8–15. To be eligible for Youth Tour, students must be heading into their junior year of high school and have parents or legal guardians who are members of ECI REC. **Applications can be found on our Youth Tour page at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) and are due February 28, 2018.**

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has grown exponentially since its inception over 50 years ago. In 2017, more than 1,800 high school juniors from 44 states participated. The week is interspersed with visits to many D.C. monuments and sites, including Capitol Hill and the Smithsonian Museum. Students also have the opportunity to meet with members of their state’s congressional delegation and discuss issues with them. This meeting is always a major highlight of the program.

Youth Tour is one of the most important programs ECI REC takes part in. We are constantly impressed by the caliber of students our Cooperative sponsors. In 2011, Belle Plaine student Connor Roth, a 2010 Youth Tour alum, was chosen to represent Iowa on the Youth Leadership Council. Conner worked at the NRECA Congressional Action Center during the group’s annual meeting, encouraging cooperative members to contact their senators and representatives about key co-op issues. Another Youth Tour alum, Dalton Schmit, was chosen to participate in the 2013 Iowa General Assembly Legislative Page program and helped plan activities for the 2014 Youth Tour trip. Dalton also interned for Senator Tom Harkin in 2014 and at the White House in 2017.

Our teens are our future, and our future is looking brighter every day. For more information about the Youth Tour program, email us at [iowayouthtour@ecirec.coop](mailto:iowayouthtour@ecirec.coop) or call us toll free at 877-850-4343.





# Happy Holidays

from the East-Central Iowa REC team

Sending you and yours our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## Get Connected With Great Holiday Gifts!



### National Online Savings

When it comes to holiday shopping, sometimes that perfect gift can only be found at a specialty store many miles away and using the internet for buying and shipping just makes sense. The Co-op Connections Card®, a benefit all ECI REC members have access to, offers four options so you can explore thousands of great deals this holiday season. Check them out at [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

### Local Retailers Offer Great Savings, Too!

The businesses below offer a variety of deals for Co-op Connections cardholders. Visit [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) and click on the card image, then retail savings to find a list of the deals and discounts. Shop local and save this holiday season!

#### Automotive/Motorcycle

- » E & T NAPA Auto Parts

#### Dining

- » Bill's Pizza & Smokehouse
- » Okoboji Grill
- » Subway

#### Entertainment

- » Heartland Acres Agribition Center

#### Health and Fitness

- » Clingman Pharmacy, Inc.
- » Styles Unlimited

#### Home and Garden

- » Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances
- » Frazier Nursery
- » In the Country Garden & Gifts
- » Michael & Dowd

#### Media

- » THE NEWS/Buchanan County Review

#### Office/Professional Services

- » Office Towne, Inc. Radio Shack

#### Recreation/Sports

- » Berry's Lanes, Inc.
- » Viking Sewing Center

#### Retail

- » Emmy Lou Candles
- » Cameron Clothing Company
- » Fabulous Fridays
- » Henkle Creek Mercantile
- » Polar Blair's Den

#### Travel

- » BEST WESTERN PLUS Independence Inn & Suites
- » Modern Motel

## ECI REC Power Boost Gift Certificates Make Holidays Happy

Giving the gift of electricity may not be at the top of your list of ideas this holiday season, but it may be the perfect fit. Having a winter heating bill covered or partially covered could be a great, unexpected surprise for a friend or family member, and it's easy to do. Simply visit [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop), mouse over Your Electric Bill, Member Programs, and choose Power Boost Gift Certificate to locate the form. Both check and credit card payments are accepted. You may also access the form by scanning the QR code.



## Get smart about lighting.

### Find up to 50% instant discounts on

### ENERGY STAR® CFL and LED screw-in lamps (including fixtures with screw-in adapters).

Your Cooperative is partnering with local retailers in Iowa as part of the Be Bright lighting program.

Discounts of up to \$10 per lamp or fixture have already been applied to the marked shelf price at participating retailers. No claim forms are used.

Just visit a store listed at [www.iowabebright.com](http://www.iowabebright.com) and purchase CFL or LED bulbs and fixtures identified on the shelf with Be Bright promotional materials.

## ECI REC 2017 REBATES & DISCOUNTS ON ENERGY STAR LIGHTING

### Interior Lighting

- » Hard-Wired Fixture: 50% of price up to \$15/fixture
- » Be Bright Program: Up to 50% instant discount on CFL and LED screw-in lamps

### Outdoor Security Lighting

- » ENERGY STAR Compact Fluorescent (≥ 26W, cold-start ballast rated to -20 degrees F): \$15/fixture
- » ENERGY STAR or DesignLights Qualified LED Fixtures: 20-34W, \$15/fixture; 35-49W, \$20/fixture; 50-74W, \$40/fixture; 75-124W, \$50/fixture; ≥ 125W, \$60/fixture

# Help Us Find These Former Members

a Cooperative Difference report

**IN MAY**, the Board of Directors of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative voted to retire \$500,112 in patronage back to its members. These margins—100% of the Cooperative's 2002 and 10% of 2010 margins—were credited to current members on June bills. Former members were sent checks. The 90-day window to cash these checks has now passed, and the people listed below have not yet cashed their checks. **These dividends will be forfeited to the Cooperative if not claimed within one (1) year.**

If you know of someone listed below, please contact that person, or their next of kin, and ask them to contact our office. ECI REC will require personal identification and/or legal documentation from these people to confirm their membership before dividends can be claimed. People not able to present the necessary documentation should not contact ECI REC on the behalf of a listed member. This list was current at the time of this printing.

**>>> Patronage represents the margins, or profits, that the Cooperative earns on electricity purchased by its member accounts. These margins are the member accounts' equity in East-Central Iowa REC. The Cooperative uses this equity to maintain its poles and wires, rebuild its distribution system, and pay expenses. When ECI REC's financial condition allows, these margins are returned back to the members who generated them. In the past 10 years, ECI REC has returned \$5,306,938 to its members.**

ADAIR, DEAN  
ADAMSON, THOMAS L  
ALBERTS, RICHARD J  
ALBERTSEN, CALEB L  
ALLEN, ROBERT L SR  
AMUNDSON, JOHN D  
ANDERSON, DEBRA J  
ANDERSON, MELISSA D  
ANDERSON, PAUL E  
ANDERSON, RICHARD D  
ANDERSON, STEVE  
ANDERSON, THELMA E  
ARY, ALLANA D  
ASCHBRENNER, QUENTIN A  
AUGUSTINE, JAMES  
AVANT, JORDAN  
AVENSON, CLAYTON C  
AXLINE, EVERETT J ESTATE  
BAKER, ROGER  
BANKERS BONDED SERVICES INC  
BANNING, MATTHEW C  
BARBER, STEVE R  
BARBOUR, MELIA D  
BARNES, ROBERT  
BARTH, NICOLE D  
BARTOSH, MARVIN  
BATCHELLER, STEVE R  
BAUMANN, JOE  
BEARBOWER, LEO  
BEAVER, DIANA H S  
BECK, DOUG  
BECKER, BERNARD J TRUST  
BECKER, BERNICE  
BECKER, CHRISTINE L  
BECKER, EARL  
BELLACH, LARRY L  
BEMER, JUNIOR R  
BENDER, BRIAN M  
BENNETT, JENNIFER  
BENTON/LINN WIRELESS  
BERG, BUDD E  
BERGEN, DENNIS  
BERGEN, JAMES  
BERNS, JOHN P  
BEYER, KELLI  
BILSLAND, CLARENCE  
BIRD, GARY L  
BIRKER, SCOTT C  
BIWER, RICHARD  
BLATCHFORD, VERNA M  
BLOCK, NATHAN A  
BLUNN, KELLY E  
BODDICKER, ARLEIGH  
BODDICKER, MILDRED  
BOOSE, RANDY S  
BOOTS, JEFFREY A  
BOWDEN, TERRY L  
BOWERS, MIKE  
BOWERS, SCOTT B  
BRAINARD, SHERRY M  
BRANDLEY, SONIA  
BRANDON, TERRY K  
BRANNAMAN, BRYAN  
BRAZIL, RANDI L  
BREWER, DALE A  
BREWINGTON, DWAIN  
BRIDGEWATER, STEVE  
BRISLAWN, SCOTT  
BROWN, DENNIS L  
BROWN, DIANE S  
BROWN, STEVE A  
BROWN, TERESA L  
BROWN, WILLIAM  
BRUMFIELD, NICOLE M  
BRUNKO, ANDY  
BRUSH, RODGER D  
BUCK, JOHN  
BUHR, BRIAN J  
BUNGER, NICOLE L  
BUOL, KEVIN J  
BURGER, ALVIN ESTATE  
BURNELL, CHRISTINA  
BURROWS, CECIL C ESTATE  
BURROWS, PATRICIA M  
BUTTERFIELD, TRACEY L  
CAFFERO, J.P.  
CAMPBELL, MICHAEL T  
CAMPBELL, STEVEN T  
CARLSON, THOMAS  
CARMAN, MICHAEL D  
CARNEY, JAMEY S  
CARR, STEVE L  
CARTER, JAY  
CARTER, LARRY W  
CERNIN, JENNY E  
CHALUPA, KATIE  
CHAMBERS, ROBERT A  
CHASE, GARY L  
CHERRY, PHILIP R  
CLAIR, FRANK L  
CLAPP, TRENT  
CLARK, LLOYD I  
CLAYTON, JOHN R  
CLUTE, VERNE  
COFFLAND FAMILY FARM  
COLESON, MEGAN M  
CONAWAY, WENDY J  
CONNELL, DAVID  
CONRAD, JODY J  
COOKE, RANDY J  
COOKSLEY, SHIELA A  
CORBIN, LAURA M  
CORTRIGHT, KEVAN J  
COUNTRYMAN, BETTY J  
COURTIER, LYNN  
COWLEY, RONALD H  
CRABTREE, STACEY J  
CRAIG, JANET A  
CRAWFORD, MALINDA S  
CRIPLE RICE, CATHY  
CROAL, MARGARET J  
CSONGRADI, WILLIAM  
CULBERTSON, DAVID  
DAKE, JASON A  
DAMGE, STELLA M  
DAVIDSON, DAVID B  
DAVIDSON, TYLER R  
DEAN, TAMMY A  
DETTBARN, AMANDA R  
DEWICK, CATHERINE  
DEWITZ, CLINT D  
DINES, KOLETA  
DIXON, GARLAND E  
DOMEYER, KEITH  
DONAHUE, DENNIS J  
DOONAN, BRENDA J  
DOWNEY, ELWOOD  
DOYLE, TRAVIS M  
DRAHOS, WESLEY  
DREISKE, KRISTINE M  
DRISCOLL, TODD C  
DRYER, WILLIAM S  
DUFFIELD, CURTIS L  
DUFRESNE, CHESTER  
DURBALA, UNA  
DUSHANE, JOHN W  
DUTLER, DAN A  
DVORAK, EUGENE ESTATE  
DVORAK, JOSHUA K  
ECKES, WILLIAM C  
ECKHART, MARTHA A  
EDDY, MIKE E  
EDMONDSON, LAURA C  
EDWARDS, WILFORD J  
EISELSTEIN, EDWIN  
ELDRED, JOEL  
ELIAS, SHAUN T  
ENGLEDOW, MELISSA R  
ERGER, DAVID  
ERGER, PAUL D  
EVANS, MARTY G  
EVANS, TERRY A  
EVENS, PEARL  
FAIRBANKS, BRIAN T  
FALTIS, BRIAN W  
FANGMAN, CURT  
FIDDES, SCOTT  
FINAMORE, MICHAEL F  
FINN, DONALD A  
FISCHER, TODD  
FISH, DAWN R  
FRANCK, LARRY J  
FRANKS, DUANE E  
FRANZENBURG, HERMAN  
FRIMML, ROBERT J  
FRITZ, EDWIN L  
FROST, STANLEY R  
FRY, BRYAN L  
GAISER, BILLIE JO  
GARDNER, CHAD  
GARDNER, SCOTT  
GARVIN L P GAS  
GEARY, ROBERT ESTATE  
GEE, LINDSAY M  
GEIGER, JUNE I  
GEORGE, DEREK W  
GEORGE, MOLLY E  
GERDES, CINDY L  
GETTY, DAVID D  
GIBBOO, KELLY J  
GIBSON, GARY J  
GIESLER, PATRICK A  
GINTER, CORY J  
GLEASON, SHARI M  
GOODALL, RAY B  
GORDON, DAWN R  
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## Don't Forget Pets in Your Winter Safety Preparations and Precautions

*a Safety feature*

**FROM SHOCK AND FIRE RISKS TO POWER OUTAGES**, winter safety preparations and precautions are not only for people, but for pets as well. Take steps to ensure your furry family stays safe this winter.

Cold winter temperatures may introduce unfamiliar electrical devices—such as space heaters, heating pads, and electric blankets—into the home. Keep them away from curious pets.

Discourage pets from sleeping near or behind electronics or appliances. Many pets are attracted to the warmth, but this is a potential fire hazard. Block off appliances and electronics if you must.

Never let your pet nap on a heating pad or electric blanket, as this presents a risk of electrical burn and can also result in overheating the appliance, which may start a fire.

Keep electrical cords tucked out of sight of puppies

and kittens. If you have difficulty getting your pet to stop chewing on the cord, you can paint it with a bitter-tasting deterrent or enclose the cord in a PVC tube or plastic sleeve.

If you have an aquarium, make sure you create a drip loop on every electrical cord that enters the tank. This will prevent water from running down the cord and into the electrical outlet. To be sure the cord stays looped, stick a cord clip on the wall just below the outlet and thread the cord into the clip.

Winter storms can cause power outages. Be sure to include pets in your emergency weather plans. Keep supplies in your emergency kit for pets in preparation for bad weather. Make sure the kit is stocked with at least three days' worth of food, water, and any medicine they may need.

After a storm, remember to use caution if you or your pets must go outside. Be on the lookout for downed lines, damaged electrical equipment, and other conductive materials. Stay far away from these hazards, and contact your utility immediately. Just because a line is down does not mean that it no longer carries an electrical charge.

For more electrical safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). 

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PEARSON, TRAVIS L  
PEERSEN, JASON  
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# Cooperative Offers Two Helpful Notification Programs

*a Keeping the Lights On message*

## THE HELPING HAND REMINDER PROGRAM

is a good option for members who struggle to pay electric bills in a timely fashion. When the account of an enrolled member becomes delinquent, ECI REC notifies their designated contact person. The contact person then reminds the member who missed their payment.

Enroll by filling out the Helping Hand Reminder authorization form online at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop) under Your Electric Bill, Member Programs. You can access the page by scanning the QR code to the right. You can also enroll in the program by mailing in the form below. Members can withdraw from the program at any time by contacting an ECI REC customer service representative at 877-850-4343.



**HELPING HAND REMINDER**

## THE NOTIFY OWNER BEFORE DISCONNECT PROGRAM

is available if you own rental property that resides in ECI REC's service area and receives electricity from the Cooperative. Once enrolled, you will be notified prior to a meter disconnect while you are renting out the property, which can be helpful if your tenant contacts ECI REC to disconnect the meter when they are moving out. Or, a renter may have late bill payments that could result in meter disconnection. In certain situations and weather conditions, the owner may want to avoid the disconnect.



**NOTIFY OWNER BEFORE DISCONNECT**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spending more time in the kitchen during the holiday season? Here's one way to be more energy efficient: Unplug small kitchen appliances, like toaster ovens and microwaves, when not in use. You could save \$10 to \$20 per year.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



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SCAN TO WATCH CEO STEVE MARLOW'S INTERVIEW WITH KCCI'S STEVE BERRY.

Electric co-op households pay

\$5 DAY on average for safe, reliable electricity

That's cheaper than most coffee drinks



### Message From the CEO, *continued from 12*

walk into work at the Cooperative every day. It is a feeling of pride. I am proud to be part of an organization that serves the community we live in, instead of a group of shareholders who may never set foot in our service territory.

Living on Cooperative lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable, and affordable electric service. Living on Cooperative lines is an investment in our community and its members.

You see, ECI REC is a not-for-profit business. When we make more money than we need to keep the lights on safely, affordably, and reliably, we return it back to our members in the form of patronage dividends. This means after all Cooperative expenses are paid, any additional money we

earn goes back into our community instead of going into a shareholder's pocket, which is pretty great!

And because we are owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community is prosperous. We do this by investing in economic development and community service projects and programs such as RECare, our revolving loan fund, and the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

I hope you view ECI REC not just as your electric utility provider, but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our community. If you are interested in learning more about how we keep the lights on, please stop by the Cooperative or give us a call. We love being part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way! 🍷

### YOUR BOARD



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- Board District 13** - Allen Albers
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- Board District 21** - Don Shonka
- Board District 23** - Jim V. Alberts
- Board District 24** - Jim Barz
- Board District 26** - Steve Rau (2017/2018 President)
- Board District 27** - Ryan Kress (2017/2018 Secretary/Treasurer)

### CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: Texas Instrument, Ti 84 Plus Silver Edition, pink, \$65. PH: 319-443-4485

FOR SALE: Augured Grain-O-Vator, built in Carroll, Iowa, \$400 OBO. PH: 319-283-0310

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



### ECI REC Director Earns NRECA Certificate

*a Cooperative Difference update*

East-Central Iowa REC Director Jim Barz recently earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate (CCD).

The Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate is an NRECA curriculum that consists of five courses that provide cooperative directors with essential knowledge and skills. The CCD is earned by attending all five required courses and successfully completing a learning assessment for each. "In obtaining this certificate, Director Barz has demonstrated to ECI REC members and other stakeholders his commitment to advancing his knowledge and performing his fiduciary duty to the best of his ability," said ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow.

Barz was presented with his certificate at NRECA's 2017 Region 5 and 6 meeting, which was held September 20-21 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. 🍷

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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

### Growing Up Co-op

IN SEPTEMBER, KCCI and our power supplier, CIPCO, visited our Urbana headquarters to talk about ECI REC's steadfast commitment to our members. The interview encouraged me to pause and reflect on our role as a local business and how privileged we are to be part of this community.

I like the feeling of walking into my favorite locally owned shops, restaurants, and stores and knowing their profit, product, and labor are making positive impacts on my community. The spirit of Main Street is embodied in these local businesses, just as it is in East-Central Iowa REC.

Electric cooperatives are as local and community centered as they come. Founded as a way to bring electricity to communities that didn't interest investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural America and beyond for decades.

The feeling I get when I frequent local businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I