

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

## SMART METER PROGRESS

page 3

On track to complete smart meter installation in 2018.



## CONTROL HEATING COSTS

page 6

Ten tips to avoid high winter heating bills.

## SAFETY PROGRAM

page 6

IAEC recognizes ECI REC's safety achievement.



## POWER RESTORATION

page 9

Outage contact info update form and how we get the lights back on.

## WIN A WEEK-LONG TRIP

MORE  
DETAILS  
ON PAGE 3



# Washington D.C.

# 2018



- Join 1,800 other students from across the country
- Meet Iowa's members of Congress
- Tour historic sights
- Take a boat cruise on the Potomac River
- Visit Smithsonian museums
- Make new friends
- Learn more about electric cooperatives
- Sharpen your leadership skills

**NEXT YOUTH TOUR • JUNE 8-14, 2018**



**03 YOUTH TOUR & SCHOLARSHIPS**

**03 SMART METER PROGRESS**  
New meters to be installed in 2018

**03 NEW CIPCO CEO**  
Bill Cherrier takes the reins for power supplier CIPCO

**04 NOMINATION COMMITTEE**  
Now taking names for 2018 Board elections

**04 ANNUAL MEETING**  
Save the date: June 21, 2018

**05 2018 REBATES**  
Residential, ag, and commercial members save on eligible products

**06 SAFETY PROGRAM**  
IAEC recognizes ECI REC's safety achievement

**07 YEARS OF SERVICE HONOREES**

**07 LINEMAN FLETCHALL RETIRES**

**08 STAY OFF THE PEAK**  
Limit use and help us save

**08 CO-OP CONNECTIONS®**  
Local participating businesses

**09 CO-OPS CO-HOST LEGISLATIVE EVENT**

**09 POWER RESTORATION**  
How we restore your power; update outage contact info

**10 SPACE HEATER SAFETY**

**06 MONEY-SMART MEMBER TIP**

**07 THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY**

**11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**11 CLASSIFIEDS**

**12 CEO MESSAGE**

**IN 2018, WE BEGIN TO CELEBRATE 80 YEARS!**

One of our parent Cooperatives, Buchanan County Rural Electric Cooperative, was founded in August 1938. In 1995, members approved consolidation with Benton County ECA, and East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative was formed.



take the member challenge

1. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: Two hundred test meters will be deployed by our installation partner, Chapman Metering, between \_\_\_\_\_ and February 14.

2. ENERGY WISE: Both your pocketbook and the environment will thank you when you choose energy-efficient appliances and products and use our \_\_\_\_\_.

3. COMMUNITY CONNECTED: Get \_\_\_\_\_ on your favorite products and services by using your Co-op Connections Card online and at participating businesses in the Independence and Vinton areas.

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 February 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 Nov./Dec. 2017 Heartland Link entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Donald Beier             | Ashley & John Martin |
| Debra Espe               | Dixie Riggle         |
| Robert & Kimberly Gibson | Jerry Schima         |
| Judy Hettinger           | Judy Wenger          |
| Sherri Kavalier          | Lavelle Wessels      |
| Rebecca Kline            | Jane West            |
| Charles & Wilda Kress    | Eleanor Wingert      |
| Evelyn Lockard           | Leslie & Amy Wood    |

Calendar Notes

Monday, January 1  
Closed for New Year's Day

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS

memberservices@ecirec.coop  
(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop  
(billing, new customers)

WEB SITE  
www.ecirec.coop

MANAGEMENT TEAM

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steve.marlow@ecirec.coop

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319-443-4343

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HOURS

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

(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)



facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec

# Youth Tour & Scholarships

**APPLICATIONS  
NOW AVAILABLE**

Both scholarship and Youth Tour opportunities are available to students whose parents are members of ECI REC. Read more about both programs at [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop).

Want to spend a week in Washington, D.C., this summer—for free? Apply to attend the Youth Tour, made possible by ECI REC. We'll send two area juniors to this fun-filled week. On your trip, you'll meet Iowa's members of Congress, spend a day on Capitol Hill, tour historical sites, and more.

**APPLY BY  
WEDNESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 28.**

ECI REC offers \$1,000 scholarships to ten students each year to continue their education in any field. If you're interested in a career as a lineman, the Cooperative offers two additional \$1,000 scholarships to those who are accepted to the Powerline Technology Program at Northwest Iowa Community College.

**APPLY BY  
WEDNESDAY,  
MARCH 7.**



**BUILDING A  
SMARTER  
COOPERATIVE**

## Be on the Watch: Smart Meter Install Material Arriving Soon!

*a Keeping the Lights On update*

ECI REC is on track to complete installation of its new smart meter system in 2018. **Reminder post-cards will be sent before installation, and door hangers will be left after to let members know the change has happened.**

About 180 test meters will be deployed on about 130 member accounts by our installation partner, Chapman Metering, between January 8 and February 14. Once the equipment and data have been tested and verified, Chapman Metering will proceed with installing the remaining smart meters.

More details about the smart meter system can be found on our website, [ecirec.coop/smartmeterinstall](http://ecirec.coop/smartmeterinstall). The ECI REC team is also here to address any questions you may have about the new meters. If you have further questions, please email



## BILL CERRIER NAMED CEO AT CENTRAL IOWA POWER COOPERATIVE

*a Cooperative Difference update*

**EAST-CENTRAL IOWA  
RURAL ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE'S POWER  
SUPPLIER,** Central Iowa



Power Cooperative (CIPCO),

recently named Bill Cherrier as Executive Vice President and CEO. Cherrier has 35 years of experience in the utility industry, most recently as Chief Planning and Finance Officer at Colorado Springs Utilities.

"Electric utilities are challenged by ongoing changes in technology, regulation, and the economy almost daily, making this a very dynamic industry," stated CIPCO Board President Paul Heineman. "The Board selected Bill Cherrier as CEO for his diverse background in the utility industry and his ability to lead our cooperative through a rapidly evolving energy landscape."

CIPCO is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperative serving 13 rural electric cooperatives and associations in Iowa. CIPCO currently employs approximately 100 people at offices in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Wilton, and Creston.

"CIPCO remains committed to meeting the power needs of its member cooperatives with reliable and affordable electricity well into the future," added Bill Cherrier. "Our members benefit from one of the most balanced and diverse electric generation mixes in the Midwest, with over 60 percent coming from carbon-free and emissions-free resources, including the recent addition of utility-scale solar generation. Resource diversity is an important strategy for managing risk, stabilizing rates, and providing flexibility for the future." 

# Committee Now Taking Nominations for 2018 Board Elections

a Cooperative Difference notice

**AT A RECENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**, each ECI REC Director selected a member from their individual Board District to serve on ECI REC's Nominating Committee. The committee's purpose will be to nominate one to two members to be placed on the ballot as candidates for Director of each Director District, a matter that will be voted on at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Members.

There are three positions up for

election from District 2, Buchanan area. You can find more information on these individual Director Districts below. If you are interested in being a candidate for one of these positions, would like to make a recommendation, or have a petition nominating a member, please contact the Nominating Committee member (contact information below) representing the applicable Director District you or the nominee could represent. Nominations may also be

submitted to the Urbana office.

Nominations by petition must have 35 names. Candidates must live in the Director District they could potentially represent. All nominations must be registered at Urbana Administrative Headquarters before the Nominating Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2018. All candidates will be reviewed and nominations confirmed at the meeting. 

## Director Positions up for Reelection and the Representing Nominating Committee Members

### District 2: Director District #21

**Currently represented by Don Shonka, Independence**

**Serving:** Hazleton, Washington, and Sumner (sections 1-18). Townships in Buchanan County.

#### Nominating Contact:

Richard Booth  
2252 Henley Ave.  
Independence, IA 50644  
319-361-4981

### District 2: Director District #24

**Currently represented by Jim Barz, La Porte City**

**Serving:** Poyner, Big Creek (except sections 31-36), and Spring Creek (except sections 31-32). Townships in Black Hawk County, Jefferson (except section 34), Homer (except sections 35-36), and Cono (except sections 31-32). Townships in Buchanan County, Polk Township (section 4) in Benton County, and Grant Township (except sections 5-8) in Linn County.

#### Nominating Contact:

Brad Jesse  
12018 Brandon Rd.  
La Porte City, IA 50651  
319-342-2763

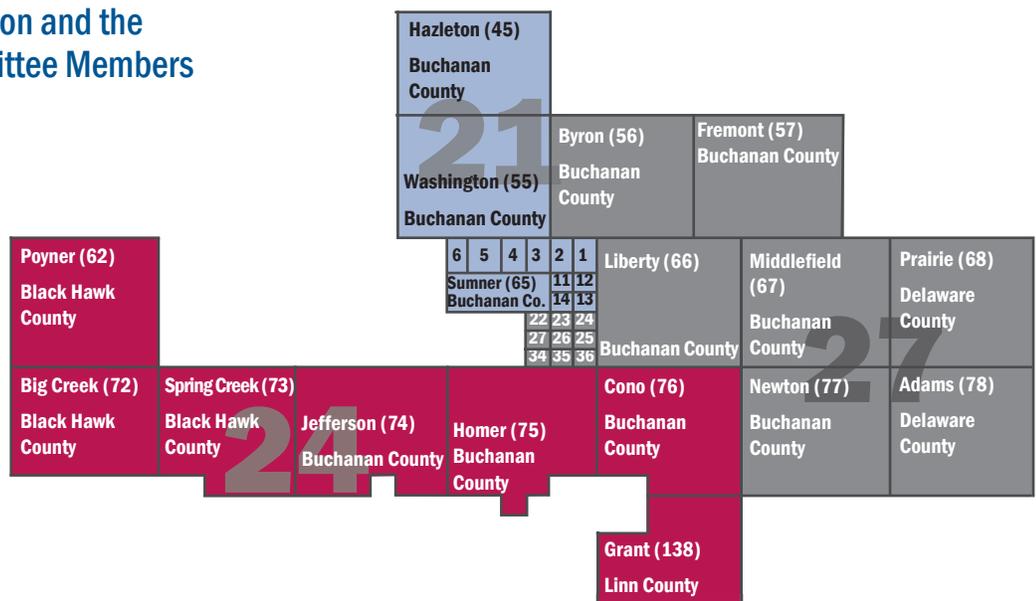
### District 2: Director District #27

**Currently represented by Ryan Kress, Winthrop**

**Serving:** Byron, Fremont, Liberty, Middlefield, Newton, and Sumner (sections 22-24, 25-27, and 34-36). Townships in Buchanan County. Prairie and Adams Townships in Delaware County.

#### Nominating Contact:

David Peck  
1884 Slater Ave.  
Winthrop, IA 50682  
319-935-3673



**POWERING FORWARD**  
for our members

**SAVE THE DATE > ECI REC**

**Annual Meeting of the Members** | **BUILDING A SMARTER COOPERATIVE**

**Thursday, June 21, 2018**  
**Independence High School, Independence**

**Registration begins at 10:30 a.m.**  
**Business meeting begins at 11:00 a.m.**

# Start the New Year Off Right With Rebates From ECI REC

an Energy Wise feature

**GET 2018 OFF TO A GREAT START** by taking advantage of ECI REC's extensive rebate incentive program. Both your pocketbook and the environment will thank you when you choose energy-efficient appliances and products and use our rebate program.

We offer rebates for commercial, residential, and agricultural Cooperative members. Residential members, for example, can save on everyday items like LED light bulbs. Ag members can get cash back on livestock ventilation equipment, and commercial members can save when choosing efficient kitchen equipment. Residential rebates are listed below; find rebate information and forms for all groups by clicking Rebates & Incentives in the gray bar on the home page at [www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop).

Because rebate qualifications vary, review the appropriate rebate form for the requirements prior to purchase. In general, members planning to apply for rebates should keep receipts and must fill out the appropriate rebate form. If you have any questions about qualifying products, please contact ECI REC's member services department at 877-850-4343. 

## 2018 RESIDENTIAL REBATES

### Heat Plus Rate

- » \$100 per home (where available, requires separate meter)
- » \$50 per apartment

### Geothermal Heat Pump

- » Closed-Loop System: \$400/ton
- » Open-Loop System: \$300/ton (no "pump & dump" systems)
- » Unit Replacement: \$250/unit

### Air-Source Heat Pump

- » Standard Air-Source Heat Pump: \$200/ton (including mini-splits)
- » Hybrid Air-Source Heat Pump: \$300/ton
- » ENERGY STAR® Bonus: \$250/unit (1.5 ton minimum)

Min. SEER 15.0, HSPF 8.5, EER 12.5

### ENERGY STAR Central Air Conditioning

- » ENERGY STAR-Qualified: \$75/unit (Min. SEER 15.0 & EER 12.5)
- » ECM Fan Motor Replacement: \$50/unit (requires qualified AC replacement)

Limit two air conditioner incentives per residence.

### Indoor Air Quality

- » Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV): \$250/unit

Equipment must serve the entire conditioned space of the home. Limit of two HRVs per home.

### Heat Pump Water Heater

- » ENERGY STAR Integrated Unit: \$650/unit
- » Add-on to Electric Storage Tank: \$300/unit (≥ 2.00 EF)

### Solar Water Heater with Electric Auxiliary Tank

- » ENERGY STAR-Qualified: \$350/unit

### High-Efficiency Electric Water Heater

- » Electric Storage Unit: \$50/unit (50-55 gal. tank - =/> 90% EF)
- » Geothermal Assisted Storage Unit: \$150/unit (50-55 gal. tank - =/> 90% EF)

### Drain Water Heat Recovery Systems

- » Heat Recovery Pipe System: \$450/unit (Not to exceed cost of system. Must have an electric water heater. Homemade systems are not eligible for the incentive.)

### ENERGY STAR Appliances

#### ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer (replacement only)

- » If both water heater & dryer are electric: \$50/unit
- » If only water heater is electric: \$30/unit

### Lighting

#### Interior Lighting

- » ENERGY STAR Hard-Wired or LED Fixtures w/ screw in adaptors: 50% of price up to \$5/fixture

Maximum incentive of \$5/fixture. Household limit of \$600 applied over a 5-year period (installs prior to 1/1/14 are exempt).

#### Be Bright Program Instant Rebate

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

### Outdoor Security Lighting

#### 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

Rebate cannot exceed 50% of installed cost.

## WEATHERIZATION

### Requirements

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

### NON-LIHEAP MEMBERS

#### 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 MEMBERS

(Same requirements apply as regular residential rebates)

#### 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

## MONEY-SMART MEMBER TIP

# 10

## Quick Fixes to Avoid High Winter Heating Bills

Put these 10 tips to work in your home to help conserve energy and money all winter long.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

-  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
-  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
-  Turn off lights when not in use.
-  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
-  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
-  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
-  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
-  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
-  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
-  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

## Cooperative Earns Safety Recognition From IAEC

### a Safety update

ECI REC was acknowledged at IAEC's annual meeting for earning its 2017 Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) certification. The premise of this NRECA safety program is to: strengthen leadership engagement and ownership; create a continuous safety improvement process; provide honest feedback to support improvement; strengthen safety improvement planning (promote employee involvement); and better enable co-ops to reduce injuries over time. Way to go, everyone!

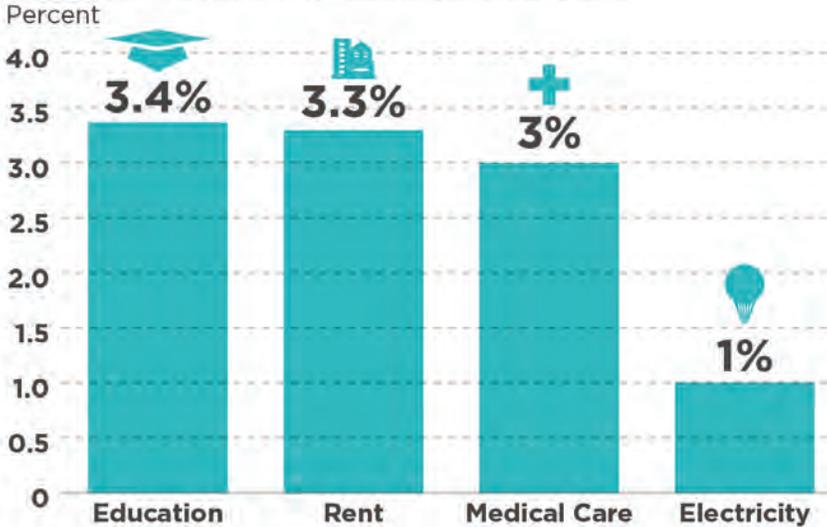
Pictured from left to right: IAEC Board President Steve Seidl, ECI REC Board President Steve Rau, ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow, IAEC Exec. VP/GM Chuck Soderberg. 



# 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



# Years of Service Honorees



**Teresa Floyd**  
*Manager of Finance & Consumer Service*  
 25 years



**Travis Schellhorn**  
*Lineman*  
 15 years



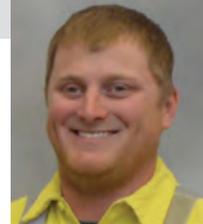
**Nathan Groom**  
*Information Services Administrator*  
 10 years



**Jim Alberts**  
*Director*  
 10 years



**Burt Byers**  
*Director*  
 10 years



**Jared Grover**  
*Lineman*  
 5 years



**Robert Derifield**  
*Information Services Technician*  
 5 years

## Lineman Retires After Decades of Service



ECI REC would like to thank lineman Rod Fletchall for his almost 30 years of dedicated employment. In June of 1988, Rod began his career as a lineman with ECI REC's parent cooperative, Buchanan County Rural Cooperative, which operated out of Independence. Congratulations, Rod! We wish you a long and happy retirement.

**Call 811 Before You Dig**



**Protect What Really Matters**

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. ♻️



**Co-op Connections® Card Puts Value in Your Wallet**

*a Community Connected feature*

**Discover the value of being an ECI REC member. Get discounts on your favorite products and services by using your Co-op Connections Card online and at participating businesses in the Independence and Vinton areas (listed below).**

**DYSART**

Emmy Lou Candles  
 Polar Blair's Den

**INDEPENDENCE**

BEST WESTERN PLUS Independence Inn & Suites  
 Bill's Pizza & Smokehouse  
 Cy & Charley's Tire & Appliances  
 E & T NAPA Auto Parts  
 Fabulous Fridays  
 Heartland Acres Agribition Center  
 In the Country Garden & Gifts  
 Michael & Dowd  
 Office Towne, Inc.  
 Okoboji Grill  
 Styles Unlimited

**VINTON**

Berry's Lanes, Inc.  
 Cameron Clothing Company  
 Clingman Pharmacy, Inc.  
 Frazier Nursery  
 Henkle Creek Mercantile  
 Modern Motel  
 Subway  
 Viking Sewing Center

**WINTHROP**

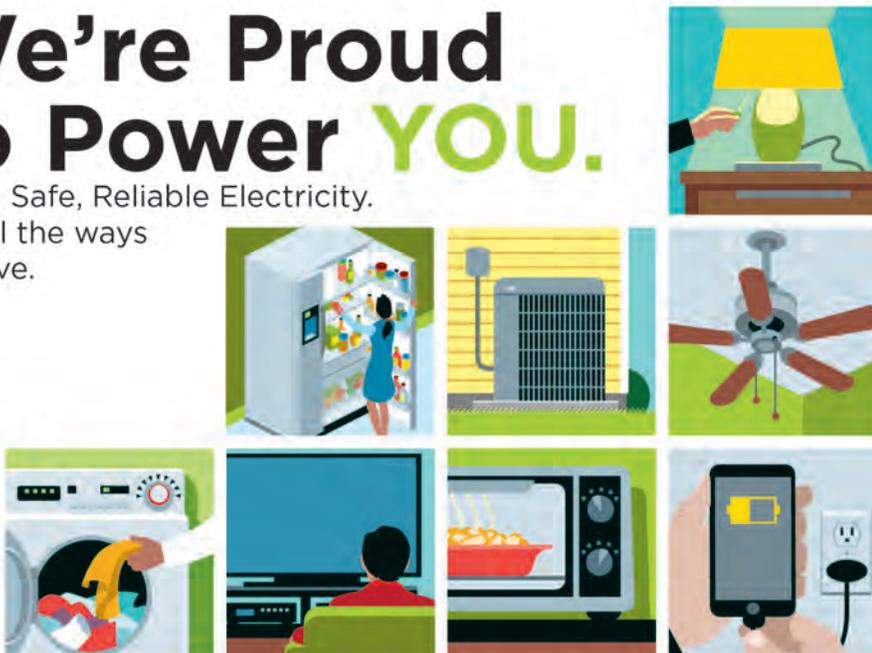
*The NEWS/Buchanan County Review*

No need to carry the card everywhere you go! Download the mobile app to use your card via your smartphone.



**We're Proud to Power YOU.**

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity.  
 For all the ways you live.



# Cedar Valley Co-ops Co-Host Legislative Event

*a Looking Out for You story*

On December 5, ten representatives from Butler County REC, Grundy County REC, and East-Central Iowa REC co-hosted a legislative forum at the Isle Casino in Waterloo with the Isle, the Cedar Valley Manufacturers Network, and the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber. State legislators Sen. Bill Dotzler (D), Rep. Ras Smith (R), Rep. Timi Brown-Powers (R), Rep. Pat Grassley (R), Rep. Bob Kressig (D), and Rep. Walt Rogers (R) attended, as did ECI REC CEO Steve Marlow.

Sponsors gave brief presentations outlining concerns and objectives regarding business

policies for the upcoming year. Vicki Daily from Grundy County REC presented for the co-ops; Sen. Dotzler, Rep. Kressig, and Rep. Rogers gave five-minute talks about their respective parties' agendas on behalf of the lawmakers.

The cooperative group has participated in this event for several years, and it has been beneficial. Interactions with the legislators are productive; co-ops have been successful in ensuring lawmakers are aware of the issues rural Iowa faces, even though their backgrounds are largely urban. 



**Members, stop by the Urbana office to pick up your free pocket calendar from ECI REC!**

**Get Your Pocket Calendar**

## You're Not Alone in the Dark

When a power outage happens, ECI REC springs into action. Here's the process we follow to ensure power is restored quickly and safely. It all starts with identifying what distribution equipment in what location has been damaged or is experiencing an interruption.



Scan to watch a video from National Rural Electric Cooperative Association explaining the steps co-ops go through to restore power.



Occasionally during a major storm, transmission towers are damaged. Repairing these is the responsibility of our power supplier and is top priority.



High-voltage transmission stations power ECI REC's 25 distribution substations. If the issue is isolated and can be resolved here, thousands of members get their power restored at once.



Next, crews inspect distribution lines between substations and the meters they serve. If the distribution lines can be repaired, power can be restored to the meters on those lines.



If your lights are out but your neighbors' are blazing, call ECI REC at 877-850-4343 right away so we can send a line crew to your home.



## Help Us Help You: Update Your Account Info

Did you know our system links your account status with your phone number? If you call in to report an outage or with a concern, our personnel can help you more quickly if your contact information is current. So if any of the below apply, please fill out the form below and return it to: ECI REC, Info Update, PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345.

- ✓ Update your contact information with any recent changes.
- ✓ List accounts that you wish to follow the same notification process.
- ✓ If an account under your name should require a different notification process, please note this account number in the second space provided.



**SCAN THE CODE TO ACCESS AN UPDATE FORM ONLINE.**

### Member Account Notification Update

Name on account(s) below:

Member account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification device 1:  Home #  Cell #  Work #  Email

Device # or address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification device 2:  Home #  Cell #  Work #  Email

Device # or address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification device 3:  Home #  Cell #  Work #  Email

Device # or address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the cell phone number(s) to the right that would be acceptable to send text messages to with outage and electric service-related information when that service becomes available.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish to be notified via text of outages and electric service-related information.

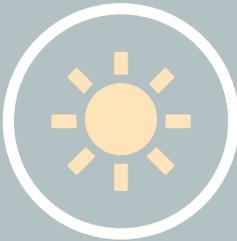
Yes, I agree to receive periodic autodialed or prerecorded calls and/or text messages from East-Central Iowa REC at the number(s) identified to the left. I understand that such calls and/or texts may relay information about planned and/or unplanned power outages and/or service interruptions, or other important service-related information, and that I can opt out of receiving such calls and/or texts at any time. I further understand that I am not required to provide consent as a condition of purchasing any property, goods, or services. I agree to notify East-Central Iowa REC immediately in the event that I voluntarily or involuntarily relinquish any number(s) identified above.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

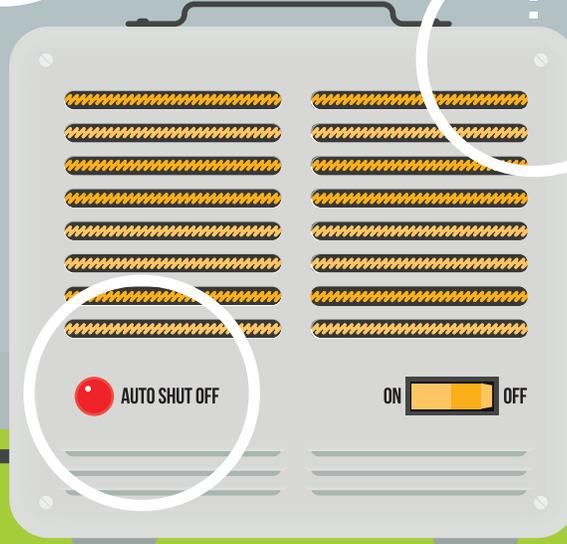
**DO:** Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



**DO:** Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

**DO:** Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

**DO:** Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



**DO:** Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



**DON'T:** Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



**DON'T:** Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.

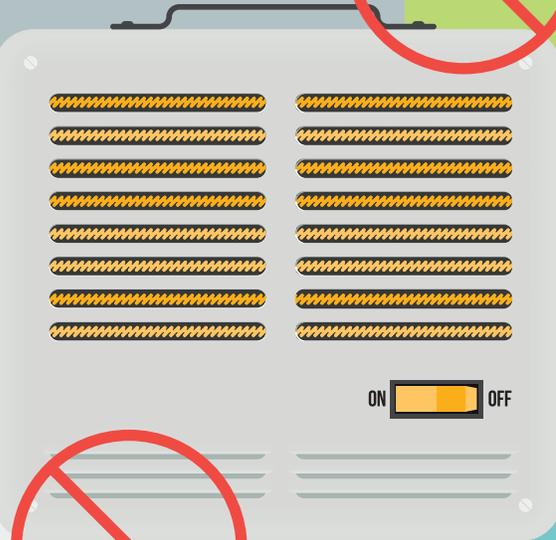
**DON'T:** Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

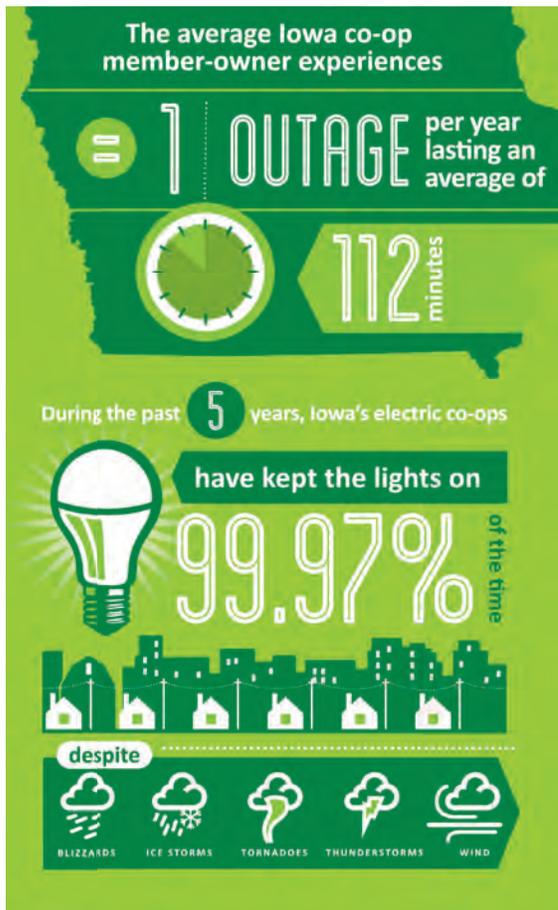


**DON'T:** Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



**DON'T:** Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.





through proactive methods, such as tree trimming. As the winter season approaches—accompanied by heavy snow and ice—vegetation management becomes more important than ever.

Trees may seem harmless on a calm, sunny day, but add a bit of wind or ice on a stormy night and those beautiful structures may threaten your home's electric supply. For example, outages can occur when branches—or entire trees—break and fall across power lines. In addition, when strong winds blow, limbs growing too close to lines may touch wires.

The resulting momentary disruptions, or “blinks,” aren't just mild annoyances that leave digital clocks flashing; they can damage computers, TVs, and other sensitive electronic equipment. However, regularly trimming trees and brush along power lines reduces the frequency of these outages.

ECI REC visually inspects our entire distribution system, including vegetation in our service territory, each year. In addition to these annual checks, our system-wide maintenance program includes a full pole inspection completed on a ten-year cycle. During these inspections, poles are checked for their structural integrity and to determine any weaknesses.

In 2017, approximately 70% of the outages ECI REC experienced were the result of severe weather, vegetation, or animals causing damage to or contacting our power lines. Our strategy going forward is to install underground lines, where economically feasible, on all new lines or line replacements. These underground lines will greatly reduce our exposure to those elements and result in a more reliable system.

When outages do occur, ECI REC can resolve them in an informed, orderly, and timely manner thanks to our enhanced outage management system. The automated metering system we are implementing in 2018 will further streamline outage restoration.

When it comes to Mother Nature, we know she is ultimately in charge. But, through our proactive planning and programs, ECI REC can work to lessen the impact on your electric service when bad weather hits. 🍃



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FOR SALE: Toro 1800 Power Curve snow blower, model no. 38381. 15-amp motor with 18-inch clearing width. Throws snow up to 30 feet. Power Curve technology cleans down to the pavement. Electric-powered, barely used. Located in Independence. \$150 OBO. PH: 563-920-5118

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Please email your ad to [classifieds@ecirec.coop](mailto:classifieds@ecirec.coop). Ads for the March/April Heartland Link must be received by Feb. 1, 2018.

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.

Heartland Link (USPS No. 313-160) is published bimonthly for \$3.30 per year by East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, 2400 Bing Miller Ln., Urbana, IA 52345-0248 with outposts located at 1707 First St. E. Independence, IA 50644 and 1600 West D. St., Vinton, IA 52349. Periodicals class postage paid at Independence, IA, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Heartland Link, 2400 Bing Miller Lane, PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345.

Phone: (319) 443-4343  
Ownership: East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative  
Publisher: Steve Marlow  
Editor: Lisa Franck

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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

### Reducing Mother Nature's Impacts

**THE HURRICANES** that recently impacted the southern United States and Puerto Rico are vivid reminders of the power of storms and the toll they can take on an electric distribution system.

While our state is nestled in the heart of the Midwest—far away from any hurricanes—we are not exempt from powerful natural disasters that can impact the poles, wires, and other equipment needed to provide reliable power to our members.

In fact, Iowa has experienced a total of 59 presidentially declared disasters—41 of which took place between 1990 and 2017. Our main hazards are associated with severe weather, including heavy rains, flooding, tornadoes, high winds, blizzards, heavy snow, and ice storms.

While the impacts of some disasters can't be prevented, there are risks ECI REC can mitigate