

# heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

**HONORING  
85 YEARS**

## WELCOME BACK!

page 5

Iowa electric cooperatives  
engage with legislators.



## GEOHERMAL SYSTEMS

page 6

Everything you need to know  
about choosing geothermal.

## 2022 AG REBATES

page 8

Invest in efficient equipment and  
earn money back.



## SEVERE WEATHER

page 8

Resources to prepare  
your family.

## Spring 2022 Operations Update

Story on page 3

Photo credit: Lisa Franck



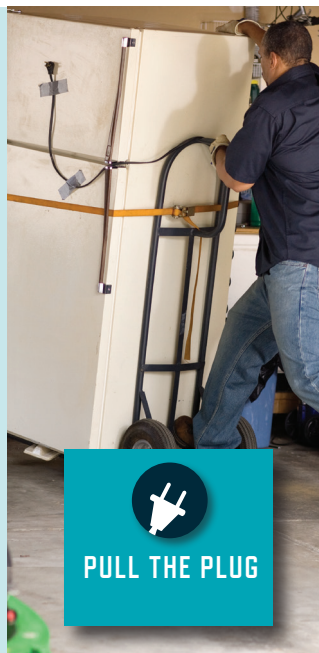
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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

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

take the  
**member challenge**

1. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: ECI REC rebuilt \_\_\_\_\_ of overhead and 20 miles of underground distribution line and cable in 2021.
2. ENERGY WISE: The most popular method of installing geothermal units in Iowa is the \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_ system.
3. COMMUNITY CONNECTED: RECare funds are distributed to \_\_\_\_\_ members through community action agencies.

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

last issue's  
**challenge winners**

The following names were drawn from the Jan./Feb. 2022 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Melvin Ward

Randal March

Four Winns LC

Fred Frost

Susan Moses

Bruce Anderson

Kay Kubik

Clark Crisman

Howard Purdy

Mary Rachel Wheeler

Denise Schommer

Tamara &amp; Ryan Gibney

Julita Goedken

Katherine Gibson

Kenny &amp; Shay Berns

Clayton &amp; Jamie Noe

**Calendar Notes****REMINDERS**

Sunday, March 13:  
Daylight Saving Time

Sunday, April 10:  
Palm Sunday

Friday, April 15:  
Good Friday

Sunday, April 17:  
Easter

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

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

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

**WEBSITE**

[www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop)

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Urbana, IA 52345-0248

**PHONE**  
319-443-4343

**TOLL FREE**  
877-850-4343

**FAX** 319-443-4359

**HOURS**

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

(closed Saturdays,  
Sundays, and holidays)

Stay connected! We post operations news and outage updates at [facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec](https://facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec).



Above: Lineworker Travis Schellhorn works to install new electric service for Pries Manufacturing, an ECI REC commercial/industrial member who recently added a new building. Cover: Engineering Technician Scott McLaughlin and Systems Controller Pat Hyland review Work Plan progress at the ECI REC Urbana office.

**WITH WARMER WEATHER** on the horizon, the ECI REC Operations team is gearing up for this year's Work Plan and maintenance projects. Here is a quick recap of the work completed last year and a preview of some of the projects we will tackle in 2022.

## 2021 Recap

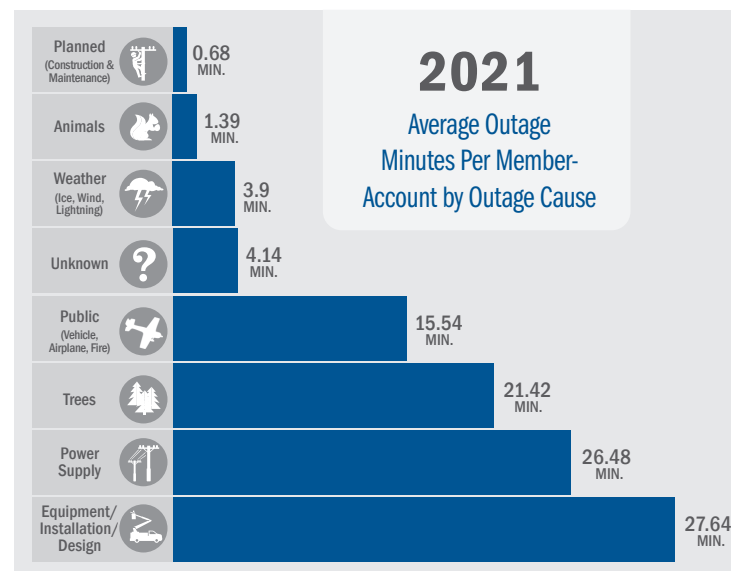
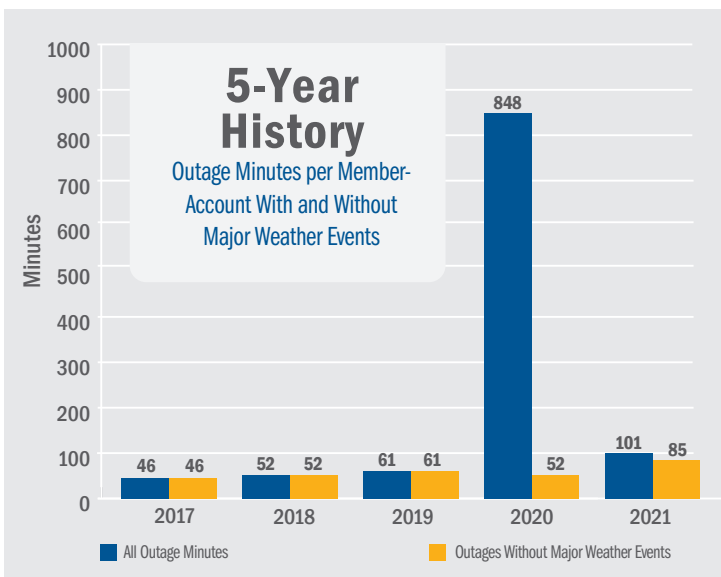
**STORM WORK** - Damage repairs from the 2020 derecho are complete, with the exception of a few improvements related to member upgrades.

**WORK PLAN & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS** - ECI REC rebuilt 23 miles of overhead and 20 miles of underground distribution line and cable in 2021. Our crews installed 136 new services, which included housing developments in the Urbana, Vinton, and Independence areas.

**2021 OUTAGES** - The charts on this page reflect the average outage minutes per member-account in 2021.

"The two windstorms that blew through this past November and December pushed the final outage numbers higher than we'd like to see," said Operations Manager Tom Schmitt. "Maintaining a high standard of reliability is a critical goal."

Our continued investment in the distribution system allows us to perform regular maintenance and other improvements, which will help us achieve that goal. As always, if you see something out on our lines that looks amiss, don't hesitate to give us a call."



## 2022 Preview

**CONSTRUCTION WORK PLAN** - In December 2020, the ECI REC Board of Directors approved a \$22.4 million Construction Work Plan for 2021–2025. This year's \$4.5 million investment calls for 38 miles of overhead construction and 23 miles of underground cable replacement.

Our contractor—Highline Construction of Paynesville, Minnesota—has already started on the overhead construction work in the Maryville area of Fayette

continued on page 4

County. Upon completion, Highline will move to the Shellsburg area in Benton County.

Weather permitting, this spring CRC Trenching of Watkins, Iowa, will begin the underground cable installations. Underground work is planned for the Urbana, Shellsburg, Aurora, Winthrop, and Jesup areas.

#### LINE INSPECTIONS, MAINTENANCE, & SUBSTATION

**IMPROVEMENTS** - ECI REC line crews are finishing up visual line patrol inspections and working on OCR (oil circuit recloser) maintenance.

Substation improvements are planned for Spring Creek this year. At the completion of this project, all substation reclosers will have been upgraded to modern electronic equipment.

**VEGETATION & TREE TRIMMING** - Landmark Turf Services of Dunkerton, Iowa, will complete ground vegetation control on over 300 miles of line in 2022. Maurer Tree Service, LLC, of Fairbank, Iowa, will trim trees along over 130 miles of line in the Urbana and Maryville areas.

**SUMMER HELP** - As part of ECI REC's commitment to our community, we'll continue to hire individuals interested in the power line construction industry as summer help. This year, we will have future power line technician students working alongside our line crews in Vinton and Independence.

"This arrangement gives our crews additional help during the busy summer months," said Tom. "And the students have the opportunity to gain valuable experience before leaving for school in the fall."

**MATERIAL & EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY** - Global supply chain disruptions continue to affect ECI REC. Lead times for larger three-phase services, or substation transformers, currently exceed one year. Recent quotes on aerial basket trucks and digger-derrick trucks have ranged from eighteen months to over two years.

"Cooperative employees continue to adjust to these challenging times," concluded Tom. "If you are considering an upgrade or new service, it is very important that you contact us as early as possible, so we can be prepared to serve your needs." 🙌



# RuralPower

Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

Energizing rural  
economic growth

## Advocating for Rural Iowa

*a Looking Out for You feature*

### Who is Iowa Rural Power?

Iowa Rural Power is a grassroots campaign run by member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives. Rural Power advocates lead the way in promoting safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy, as well as a bright and continuous economic future for Iowans.

### Why do cooperative voices matter?

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

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

### How do I get involved?

Visit [iaruralpower.org/contact-us](http://iaruralpower.org/contact-us) and sign up for updates about how you can have an impact on energy issues! 🙌

## Members Receive Fraudulent Phone Calls

*a Safety alert*

### IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

several ECI REC members received fraudulent calls in which the callers identified themselves as ECI REC employees. The callers told members they needed to pay their electric bills immediately, or they would be disconnected within the hour.

These calls did not come from ECI REC and serve as a reminder to all to be wary of phone scams. If you receive a call of this nature, do not give your personal information to the caller. Hang up and call our office directly to check the legitimacy of the call. ECI REC personnel will be able to provide members with specific account details, which scammers will not be able to do. 🙌







Advocates for Iowa's electric cooperatives met with legislators in Des Moines to wish them well in the 2022 legislative session. It was a great opportunity to discuss issues that impact our communities and our member-consumers. Pictured are ECI REC Director Don Shonka, Senator Craig Johnson, and ECI REC Board President Steve Rau.

**THE ANNUAL** Welcome Back Legislative Reception took place on January 11 in downtown Des Moines. At the event, more than 160 directors, managers, and employees from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with nearly 90 state legislators. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, and FUEL Iowa.

The reception was a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2022 session to discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, as the legislature and governor prioritize tax cuts this session, we're asking for a correction to a 2018 legislative oversight that left electric cooperatives out of a tax exemption on digital good and services. This unfair tax burden has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in increased taxes for rural electric cooperatives.

To learn more and stay informed, follow the hashtags #ialegis and #WeAreRuralPower on social media.

**Save a tree (and time).**

Going paperless with SmartHub is easy. And with convenient access to your bill any time, anywhere, doing your part to save the planet just got easier.

...all in the palm of your hand and online.

**SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.**

# Everything You Need to Know About Geothermal Heating and Cooling

*an Energy Wise article*

**NO MATTER THE SEASON**, it's important to feel comfortable in your home. That means staying warm and cozy when it's cold and refreshed and cool when the sun is beating down.

If you're thinking about updating your home's heating and cooling system, ECI REC encourages you to consider an electrically powered geothermal system.

## How does a geothermal system work?

Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the earth's constant temperature by circulating a water-based solution through buried pipes. In cold weather, this solution absorbs heat from the earth and carries it to the geothermal unit. The system then concentrates this heat and delivers it throughout your home. In warm weather, excess heat is carried from your home into the earth. The geothermal system can also be integrated with your water heater to provide low-cost hot water.

## Benefits of geothermal systems

- » **They tap into an unlimited resource.** The yard around your home contains a vast reservoir of thermal energy to heat and cool your home. With a geothermal heating and cooling system, your lawn becomes a permanent energy source.
- » **They are a smart alternative to fossil fuels.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy rank geothermal technology as the most efficient and environmentally safe heating and cooling option available. For example, geothermal heat pumps are four to five times more efficient than the most efficient gas furnaces. This is a smart, efficient, emission- and carbon-free solution that works with the earth by moving heat rather than making it.
- » **They lower your energy bills.** Geothermal heat pumps can cut your home heating costs by 50% in the winter and cooling costs by 40% in the sum-


mer, while also providing low-cost hot water for your home.

- » **They make your home comfortable.** Geothermal systems are very quiet and provide even temperature and humidity, creating a pleasant environment.
- » **They are flexible.** Geothermal heat pumps can be placed in new buildings or retrofitted into existing buildings. Today, many homeowners are requesting multifunction geothermal units that deliver in-floor heating while providing a forced air system in another part of the house.
- » **They last a long time.** Geothermal systems last longer because they are self-contained and housed entirely within your home and underground. They are sheltered from extreme outside weather conditions that conventional systems must endure. Geothermal heat pumps also have fewer mechanical components, making them more reliable and less prone to failure.
- » **They are safe.** Geothermal systems have no flues or flames. They create no dangerous carbon monoxide and come with a sealed refrigerant circuit. There are no unsightly tanks or noisy outdoor equipment to bother you or your neighbors.
- » **There are extra incentives for ECI REC members.** Your Cooperative offers rebates for new and replacement geothermal systems. Geothermal systems are also eligible for ECI REC's Heat Plus rate, and they may be eligible for federal and state tax credits.

## How geothermal systems are installed

Installing the right size of equipment is essential to getting the best performance and making your home comfortable. It is important to contact a qualified geothermal heat pump installer, as there are a number of factors to consider when sizing your system. An installer will perform an analysis of the specific heating and

cooling requirements for your home, then calculate the required size of the heat pump unit and loop field.

Connecting the system is surprisingly simple. The most popular method of installing geothermal units in Iowa is the closed-loop system. Homeowners can choose from several closed-loop variations. Available land space, soil type, and the amount of rock near your home will determine which installation is best for you. All installation types are energy efficient and offer the same high performance. 



BENEFICIAL  
electrification

**Questions about geothermal systems or beneficial electrification? Call 877-850-4343 and let us help!**

**As a member-owned cooperative, we work for you, offering friendly, local, reliable, no-cost help with all your energy-efficient household decisions.**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can impact the efficiency of your system.


Source: Dept. of Energy





# Installing On-Site Generation? Members Must Notify ECI REC

**FOR YOUR SAFETY AND OURS**, owners of alternative energy production facilities that will be attached to an electric transmission or distribution line are required to notify their utility. If you have questions, please contact ECI REC at 877-850-4343.

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

## QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS

ECI REC strives to provide you with the best service at the lowest possible cost. But sometimes you have questions regarding your electrical service or billing, or possibly a complaint. We would like to know. Please contact us! Our office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Local phone: 319-443-4343  
Toll free: 877-850-4343  
Fax: 319-443-4359

Email: [ecirec@ecirec.coop](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 E.  
Court Avenue, Des Moines, IA  
50319-0069

## COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

2021  
DONATIONS



**\$12,000**  
12 SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOOL  
FUNCTIONS **\$400**

**\$14,650** LOCAL OR COUNTY  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH  
& SAFETY  
ORGANIZATIONS **\$16,250**

**\$22,440** COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS

IN 2021, ECI REC GAVE  
**\$65,740** TO  
**35 CAUSES**

**SUPPORT RENEWABLES IN IOWA > You can volunteer to support the development of renewable energy production facilities in Iowa via your monthly bill. Per month in 2021, an average of 76 ECI REC members contributed an average of \$4.00 each to support the production of renewable energy in Iowa. Member support for the year totaled \$3,685.50.**

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

### IOWA RENEWABLE CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM

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

ECI REC Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Daytime phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

I wish to support the purchase of:

☐ 100 kWh for an extra \$2.10 per month

☐ 200 kWh for an extra \$4.20 per month

☐ 300 kWh for an extra \$6.30 per month

\_\_\_\_\_ kWh at \$2.10 per 100 kWh per month

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



# Members Help Members Through RECare Program

*a Community Connected article*




Scan to fill out form online.

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

In 2021, 72 members donated \$7,953 to RECare. Some donated in one payment, while others had the Cooperative add a few dollars to their electric bills each month. No matter the size or frequency of the donation, it made a difference! There are many members who have trouble making ends meet, and we are proud so many of our members are digging into their pockets to help others.

RECare funds are distributed to qualifying members through community action agencies. Donations from our northern service area are administered by Operation Threshold, while donations from our southern service area are administered by Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP).

If you would like to support RECare, visit [ecirec.coop](http://ecirec.coop). Hover over Account Services, look down the list for Member Programs, and click on RECare Program. 






## March 21-25, 2022, is Severe Weather Awareness Week in Iowa

Iowans are no strangers to the hazardous weather spring can bring. On average, Iowa sees close to 50 tornadoes, tens of flash flood events, hundreds of severe thunderstorms, and thousands of non-severe thunderstorms, according to the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Get your family prepared! For tips on what to do before, during, and after severe weather events, visit [ready.iowa.gov](http://ready.iowa.gov).






## Severe Thunderstorms

### OUTSIDE

-  Avoid open spaces
-  Avoid high ground
-  Avoid boats & bodies of water
-  Avoid trees
-  Avoid tents and pavilions



### INSIDE

-  Avoid taking a bath or shower
-  Avoid using electronic equipment
-  Avoid using corded phones
-  Avoid concrete floors and walls
-  Avoid windows

*Image source: ready.iowa.gov*

CELEBRATE  
NATIONAL  
AG DAY ON  
MARCH 22!



*Photo credit: Photomall | Dreamstime.com*

## ECI REC Offers Rebates for Ag Members

*an Energy Wise feature*

### VENTILATION AND CIRCULATION

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

### DAIRY OPERATIONS

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

### LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

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

**LIGHTING:** Fixtures must be ENERGY STAR® qualified and/or on the qualified products list published online at [www.designlights.org](http://www.designlights.org) by the DesignLights Consortium™

### HORTICULTURE LED FIXTURES

New construction or replacement:

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

Some conditions apply. Refer to the equipment rebate forms at [www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop) for qualifications and detailed requirements.



# Grain Bin Clearance Notice

a Safety feature

**AS REWARDING AS IT MAY BE**, farming is an extremely difficult job—and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At ECI REC, safety is top priority for both our employees and our members. That's why we are required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials.

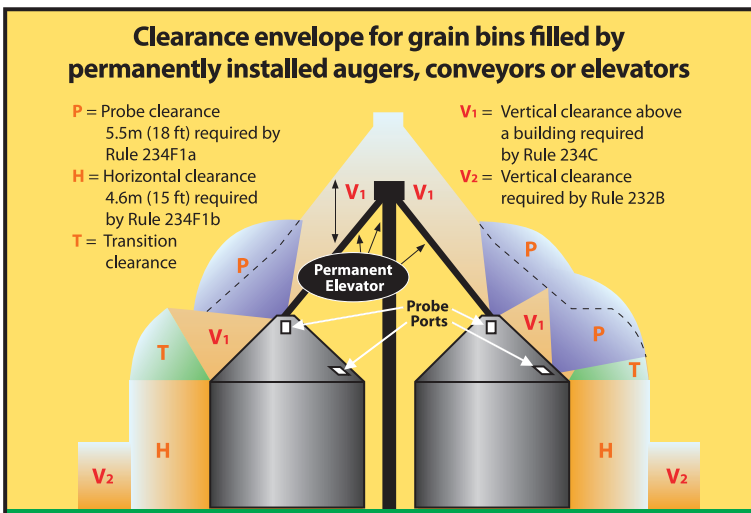
The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors, and elevators. Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas with existing bins, proximity to overhead power lines must be considered.

The drawings accompanying this article show the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact your electric cooperative.

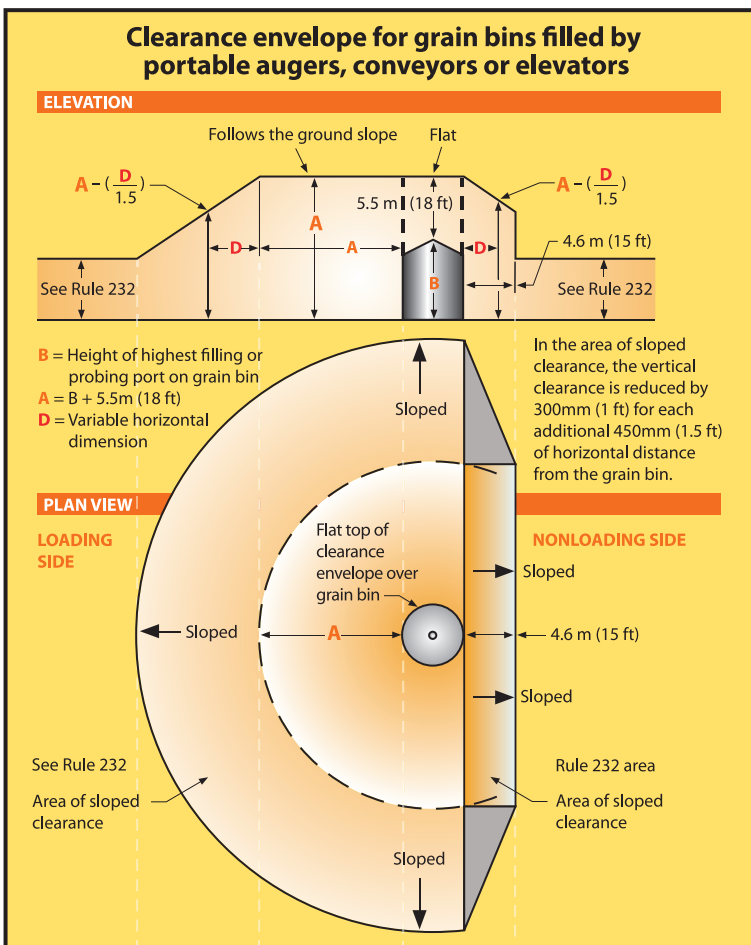
According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 -- 25.2(3) b: An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line that does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute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

**DISCLAIMER:** These drawings are provided as part of ECI REC's annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

Every care has been taken for correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, ECI REC accepts no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes, or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



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## ATTENTION MEMBERS: Use Caution When Burning Ditches This Spring

Burning helps clean things up, but it can also cause extensive damage to Cooperative property, resulting in electric service problems. Members involved in such fires may be invoiced for damage they cause to Cooperative property.

### TWO TIPS FOR SAFE BURNING

**1** Green, or newer, poles are more susceptible to burning—use extra caution.

**2** Always be aware of the locations of poles, anchor guy assemblies, underground cabinets, and other important Cooperative equipment when burning.

# Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

As the snow melts and spring arrives, landscaping season follows. If you're adding trees this year, consider your power lines. The wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard.

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit [www.ArborDay.org](http://www.ArborDay.org).

Happy Arbor Day!  
Friday,  
April 29

## LARGE TREES

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

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

## MEDIUM TREES

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

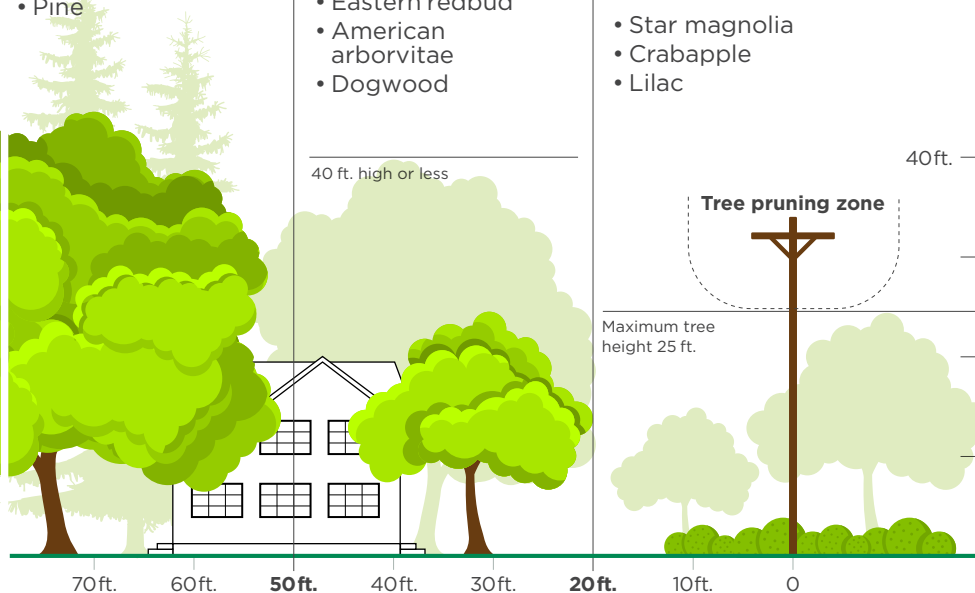
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenrain tree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwood

## SMALL TREES

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

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

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



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

**April  
Is Safe  
Digging  
Month!**

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



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

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

## Privacy Policy for East-Central Iowa REC

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

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

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

**The Way We Use Information:** We limit the use and collection of nonpublic personal information to that which is necessary to maintain and administer financial services. We do not share this information with outside parties unless:

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

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

**Limiting Employee Access to Information:** East-Central Iowa REC limits employee access to customer information to those with a business reason for knowing such information. All of our employees are educated on the importance of confidentiality and customer privacy. Any employee who violates the financial privacy of our customers will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures and possible termination.

**Protection of Information via Established Security Procedures:** To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the correct use of information, we have put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information.

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

At East-Central Iowa REC, we value our customer relationships. We want you to understand how we use the information you provide and our commitment to ensuring your personal privacy. If you have any questions about how East-Central Iowa REC protects your information, please contact us at 877-850-4343 or email [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop).



## Message From the CEO

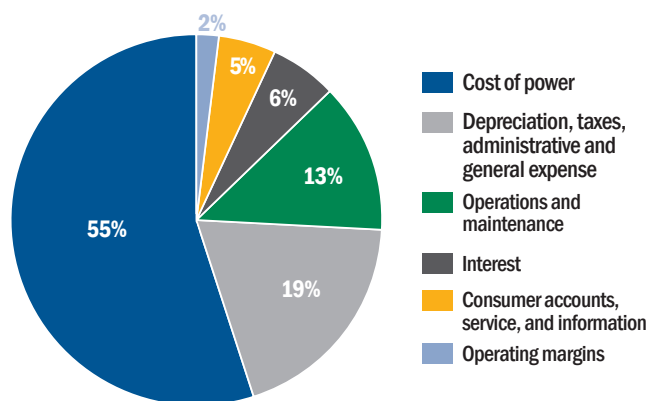
continued from page 12

to go so long without raising electric rates. In 2015, we restructured our rates so the Facility Charge captured more of our fixed costs and lowered the energy component. This adjustment was revenue neutral, as we did not collect more revenue as a whole. The last overall rate increase of 2.5% occurred in 2012. Ten years without a rate increase is unheard of in today's economy.

So, what is ECI REC's plan regarding electric rates? We will work with our rate consultant and update our cost-of-service study. This study will give us a clearer picture of our future revenue requirements and help us develop an equitable rate structure. Your Cooperative will not rush this process. Our plan is to take time to educate our Board of Directors, employees, and membership as we prepare for a rate adjustment. Current projections show an increase in early 2023.


As to the 2022 budget, ECI REC has a robust plan to continue investing your dollars wisely to deliver safe, reliable, and environmentally friendly electricity. Members' power usage needs have evolved, and there's an expectation for reliable power 24/7. The budget will

## 2022 Budget at a Glance

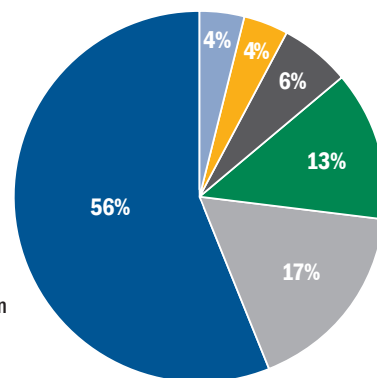


invest over \$5 million in our electric grid, \$300,000 in maintenance programs, and \$200,000 in technology.

At the end of the day, electricity remains a good value. I am proud of our team, who does a great job keeping costs low and our level of service high. Nothing we do would be possible without the talented and dedicated employees who provide service to you 365 days a year.

We understand these times are challenging—your Cooperative is here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy, please give us a call at 877-850-4343. 

## Where Your Dollars Were Spent in 2021



## YOUR BOARD

**Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott**  
(2021/2022 Vice President)

**Board District 2 - Julie Kester**  
(2021/2022 Asst. Secretary/Treasurer)

**Board District 3 - Brian McNulty**

**Board District 4 - Gary McKenna**

**Board District 6 - Don Shonka**

**Board District 8 - Nick Donlea**

**Board District 9 - Steve Rau**  
(2021/2022 President)

**Board District 10 - Ryan Kress**  
(2021/2022 Secretary/Treasurer)

## CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

FOR SALE: 1995 John Deere CS8 chipper/shredder, \$400 OBO. Ph: 319-415-5275.

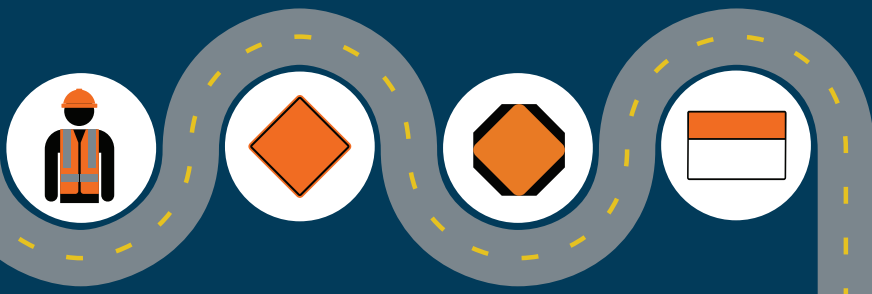
WANTED: One copy of Judge John Tobin's book *Impossible Canyon*, published in 1982. Ph: 319-443-2760.

Please email your ad to [classifieds@ecirec.coop](mailto:classifieds@ecirec.coop). Ads for the May/June 2022 *Heartland Link* must be received by April 1, 2022.

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.

## NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK 2022

# WORK ZONES ARE A SIGN TO SLOW DOWN



Work zone crashes killed 762 people in 2019, including 135 roadway workers. Most of the people killed were drivers and their passengers. So slow down and stay alert as you approach and pass by a work zone. Help spread the word during National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 11-15.

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CLIP AND MAIL

See page 2 for the Member Challenge questions.

Answers: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

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

Find tools for members at  
[www.ecirec.coop](http://www.ecirec.coop)



#### 24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub

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



#### Outage Center & Map

View current outages via SmartHub or at [outages.ecirec.coop](http://outages.ecirec.coop):81.



#### Online Forms

Access rebate, service request, and program sign-up forms.



#### Call Before You Dig

Notify utilities before you dig at [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com) or call 811.



#### Co-op Connections®

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#### Heartland Link E-Newsletter

Email [ecirec@ecirec.coop](mailto:ecirec@ecirec.coop) and ask to receive our newsletter via email.



#### Iowa Rural Power

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



CEO TERESA FLOYD

## Message From the CEO: Looking to 2022 and Beyond

**OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS**, we've all witnessed the increasing costs of fuel and groceries, as well as supply chain issues and the overall impact these concerns are having on our economy.

The cost of materials is rising for ECI REC too. Due to supply chain issues, our timetable for procurement of those materials has also greatly lengthened. What once took a few weeks can now take months. Planning for a fleet purchase is now a years-long prospect.

The additional power cost prompted by last February's polar vortex pushed our power provider, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), to increase our rates 1.5 mills/kWh. This increase will remain in 2022. So far, ECI REC has been able to absorb it through the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) and maintain our current rates.

However, CIPCO also recently completed a cost-of-service study. Based on the results, they will be moving to a five-part cost-of-service and rate design. It is unclear what impact the new rate design will have on ECI REC's rates.

With all these factors in mind, it became evident as we prepared the 2022 budget that we will only be able

*continued on page 11*