

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

TWO FAIRS, TWO CHANCES TO VISIT ECI REC!

Story on page 3



Photo credit: Christinola | Dreamstime.com

2023 SERVICE CHARGES

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Board decides to increase two charges.

YOUTH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Meet the Youth Tour winners and scholarship recipients.

STORM REPAIR AID

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ECI REC crews hit the road to help neighboring co-ops.



REC DAY ON THE HILL

page 5

Cooperatives gather to discuss 2023 legislative issues.



SPECIAL EDITION Annual Meeting & Annual Report



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Monday, May 29 – Closed for Memorial Day

Wednesday, June 28 - Virtual Annual Meeting of Members

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(rebates, product sales)

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(billing, new customers)

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(closed Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)

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WE PAY YOU TO PULL THE PLUG

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

PROGRAM ENDS JUNE 30, 2023.

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. COMMUNITY CONNECTED: This summer, ECI REC is excited to participate in both the Benton and Buchanan _____ for the first time.
2. COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE: In making this change, your Cooperative will save nearly \$4,500 in _____ fees and materials.
3. PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT: Your Cooperative's strategy was to work toward recovering our fixed costs via the Facility Charge and to _____ the Energy Charge (or electric rates).

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 June 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 March/April 2023 Heartland Link entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Dewayne Cronbaugh | Michael F. Flaucher |
| Lee Demoss | Porcia A. Grover |
| Ruth Wieditz | Delores M. Meyer |
| Rich Zeis | Mike R. Williams |
| Jimmy Crumes | Charles E. Smith |
| Dick Kenney | Henry J. Zeien |
| Kevin Schwartz | Everett J. Mills |
| Myron Henkel | Karen R. Connell |



LOOK
for the white
bucket truck
and the white
tent.

LEARN
about safety
by testing out
the Hazard
Hamlet!

COVER STORY

Two Fairs, Two Chances to Visit ECI REC!

a Community Connected feature

Benton County Fair: Friday, June 23, 2023
1801 2nd Ave., Vinton | 4 p.m –7 p.m.

Buchanan County Fair: Thursday, July 6, 2023
204 12th St., Independence | 4 p.m.–7 p.m.

THIS SUMMER, ECI REC is excited to participate in both the Benton and Buchanan County Fairs for the first time. "Summer is a time to celebrate community and enjoy one of Iowa's greatest traditions: the county fair," said CEO Teresa Floyd. "We can't wait to connect with our members and other friends during these events!"

While at the fair, enter our prize drawing for your chance to win a \$50 bill credit. Just complete the form below and bring it to the ECI REC tent. Each fair will have five winners! Booth visitors also have a chance to win a tasty treat from the county's corresponding Cattlemen's Association, Pork Producers, or Dairy Producers' booths.

ECI REC will have insulation, lighting, and wall module displays in the tent. You can also get information on energy efficiency rebates, and we will have Co-op Connections® cards and brochures on hand.

FREE
toy hard
hats for kids
while
supplies
last!



Scan to find a
printable copy of
the form on our
website. Available
June 7–July 6.



SNAP
a picture with
me and tag
ECI REC on
Facebook for a
chance to win a
\$25 bill credit!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RELEASES 2023 SERVICE CHARGES AND FEES

a Keeping the Lights On notice

AFTER CAREFUL REVIEW and consideration, the Board of Directors has determined that an increase in two of ECI REC's electric service charges and fees is necessary. The following fees will be effective as of June 1, 2023.

Disconnect Member-Owned Security Light: \$100.00 (unchanged)

Disconnect Power (Non-Remote): \$150.00 (unchanged)

Locate, Member-Owned Underground Fault: \$107.00* (unchanged)

Locate, Member-Owned Underground: \$107.00* (unchanged)

Outage Service Call, After Hours: \$321.00*

Outage Service Call, Regular Business Hours: \$160.50*

Reconnect (Non-Remote), After Hours: \$321.00* (unchanged)

Reconnect (Non-Remote), Regular Business Hours: \$160.50* (unchanged)

Test Meter: \$26.75* (unchanged)

Returned Check: \$30.00 (unchanged)

Non-Payment Posting: \$150.00 (unchanged)

Non-Payment Disconnect (Remote): \$50.00 (unchanged)

Non-Payment Reconnect (Remote), After Hours: \$80.25* (unchanged)

Non-Payment Reconnect (Remote), Regular Business Hours: \$53.50* (unchanged)

**Includes applicable state and local taxes*

FAIR ENTRY FORM: Complete and turn in at either county fair for the chance to win a \$50 bill credit!

First & Last Name: _____

Service Location/Street Address: _____

Town: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Email: _____

Meet ECI REC's 2023 Youth Tour Representatives!

a Community Connected update



FOR OVER 60 YEARS, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives has been sending high school students to our nation's capital for the NRECA Youth Tour. Each summer, nearly 40 Iowa high school students attend, including students selected by ECI REC.

"Youth Tour is the highlight of the summer for many students from Iowa, and we're proud to send two of our best and brightest to Washington, D.C., this year to participate," said East-Central Iowa REC CEO Teresa Floyd. "These students will gain a firsthand understanding of the legislative process, visit the museums and monuments of D.C., learn about advocating on behalf of their communities, and make connections that will last a lifetime. Our youth are our future, and we can give them the tools they need to succeed in advocacy, government, and public service. We look forward to this year's trip and continuing to be a sponsor of the Youth Tour tradition in the years to come."

The 2023 event will take place June 17-23. In addition to touring, the Youth Tour students will participate in leadership training, engage in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jump-start their national peer network, and learn more about electric cooperatives. Participants hail from all corners of the state, including one sophomore and one junior from ECI REC's service area. This year, your Cooperative will be represented by Elizabeth (Lizzy) Kremer and Keelie Curtis.



Lizzy Kremer is a sophomore at Independence High School and is the daughter of Joe and Lisa Kremer of Independence. She serves as an officer for the Independence FFA Chapter and leads several committees, including Career and Leadership Development Events. She also acts as the administrator and content manager for the chapter's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Lizzy dedicates time to giving back to her community and participates in the Silver Cord Program. She volunteers through 4-H, FFA, and her church and is the vice president of the Byron Vikings 4-H Club. Lizzy's other activities include cross country and archery.



Keelie Curtis is a junior at Starmont High School and is the daughter of Chris and Tracy Curtis of Aurora. She participates in individual and group speech, yearbook, 4-H, and FFA. Keelie also achieved all-conference honorable mentions in both softball and volleyball. She is a member of the National Honor Society, a DECA officer, and president of her class. Keelie is an avid volunteer and has dedicated her time to religion, robotics, blood drives, school concessions, volleyball events, and a number of other community activities.

Iowa's electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students on this trip since 1958. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperatives. Over 50,000 students have participated in the national Youth Tour program since its creation. For more information, visit www.youthtour.coop.

ECI REC AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS



Kaitlyn Ballard
Benton Community
Parents: Martin and Melissa Ballard, Marengo
Northwest Missouri State University, Agricultural Education



Brody Berninghaus
Center Point-Urbana
Parents: Matthew and Michele Berninghaus, Center Point
Northwest Iowa Community College, Powerline Technology



Frankie Dolan
East Buchanan
Parents: Sean and Sara Dolan, Masonville
Iowa State University, Agronomy



Aubrey Gates
Union
Parents: Jason and Jennifer Gates, La Porte City
University of Sioux Falls, Exercise Science and Business



Annie Johnson
Independence
Parent: Allison Johnson, Independence
Buena Vista University, Agricultural Business and Pre-Law



Annabelle Newton
Vinton-Shellsburg
Parent: Chad Newton, Vinton
Iowa State University, Agricultural Education and Communications



Madelyn Otdoerfer
Starmont
Parents: Andy and Jennifer Otdoerfer, Lamont
University of Northern Iowa, Art Education



Allison Pollock
Center Point-Urbana
Parents: Brett and Ann Pollock, Vinton
Buena Vista University, Biomedical Science and Pre-Med



Brock Steinlage
Oelwein
Parents: Jeffery and Melinda Steinlage, Oelwein
Iowa State University, Agricultural Systems Technology



Maria Streif
West Central
Parents: David and Marcia Streif, Maynard
University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Engineering



Brady Weepie
Wapsie Valley
Parents: Brian and Beth Weepie, Fairbank
Wartburg College, Environmental Science



Jacob Yexley
Jesup
Parent: David Yexley, Jesup
Kirkwood Community College, Agricultural Sciences and Business



Photo credit: Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative

Line Crews Assist in the Aftermath of March Storm

a Keeping the Lights On story

ECI REC WAS FORTUNATE to experience only minimal issues from the storms on Friday, March 31. However, some of our neighboring cooperatives were not so lucky.

Following the storms, Operations Manager Tom Schmitt received a call at 9:00 p.m. from Scott Meinecke, the Safety and Loss Control Director for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. Scott was reaching out for mutual aid assistance for cooperatives who were in need.

At 6:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, two ECI REC line crews hit the road with a digger truck and a big bucket truck. Travis Schellhorn, Jared Grover, Colton Dietrick, and Braxton Clubb assisted on a mutual aid call for Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative. Crews worked near the town of Clarence in Cedar County until 10:00 p.m. On Sunday, they worked north of Wilton. They returned home at 2:30 p.m. that afternoon. This was a great example of cooperation among cooperatives! ♻️

Iowa’s Rural Electric Cooperatives Advocate for Regulatory Clarity During 2023 REC Day on the Hill

a Looking Out for You article

MORE THAN 200 EMPLOYEES and elected directors from Iowa’s locally owned rural electric cooperatives convened at the Iowa State Capitol on March 15 for the annual REC Day on the Hill.

“Our annual advocacy day at the Capitol is a valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face with our elected officials and share a local perspective on issues that impact rural Iowa and rural economic development,” remarked Roger Solomonson, president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives Board of Directors.

Manager of Finance Jennifer Schmitz represented East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative at the event.

Advocates asked elected officials to support legislation that clarifies the authority and governance of local electric cooperative boards. We believe that these locally elected boards should have the authority to set rates and fees for electric service. Member-consumers approving rates and fees that they themselves will pay is perhaps the most effective “check and balance” possible.

Additionally, cooperative representatives discussed the dangers of electric service deregulation and how it would negatively impact rural Iowa businesses and communities. Service territory protections have been in place for more than 40 years in Iowa to ensure that citizens in sparsely populated areas have access to reliable and affordable power.

Advocates also educated legislators on the benefits of the cooperative business model, including local ownership, cost-based rates, and democratic governance. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda that provided information on topics like economic development, electric vehicles, digital metering advancements, investments in technology, safety innovations, energy efficiency efforts, and vegetation management work.

ECI REC members can learn more about the legislative priorities of Iowa’s electric cooperatives and Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at www.iaruralpower.org. ♻️

NEW Method for Allocation Notices – Members Take Note!

a Cooperative Difference update

AS PART OF THEIR DUE DILIGENCE, your Board of Directors has voted to forego the production of a separate mailing for notifying members of their deferred patronage dividends. This will begin with 2022's allocation notices. Members will still receive notices about their deferred dividends in the month of May. However, the notices will now be listed under the "Message from ECI REC" section of your May bill rather than sent as a separately mailed statement. In making this change, your Cooperative will save nearly \$4,500 in mailing fees and materials.

What are deferred patronage dividends?

As a nonprofit electric cooperative, East-Central Iowa REC is owned by you and our other member-consumers. At the end of the year, we allocate our annual margins, or profits, from a past year to those of you who received electric service during that year. These profits are called "deferred patronage dividends." These dividends are allocated to you based on the amount you paid for electricity during that time and represent your ownership in East-Central Iowa REC.

ECI REC Team Members Work to Earn Certifications a Keeping the Lights On shout-out

DANE PETERSON, ENGINEERING DESIGN TECHNICIAN -

Dane has completed the four-step Utility Training Services, Inc., staking program. He is now a UTS Power Line Design & Staking Certified Professional.

Dane works out of the Vinton Operations Center and will reach 10 years of service with ECI REC this July. Operations Manager Tom Schmitt presented Dane with his certification diploma at this February's safety meeting. Congratulations, Dane!

COLTON WOLFE & COLTON DIETRICK, JOURNEY LINE-WORKERS -

Colton Wolfe was recognized at March's safety meeting for completing the Line Maintainer Apprenticeship Program, and Colton Dietrick was recognized for the same in April. Operations Manager Tom Schmitt presented both with their Journey Line Maintainer Certificate and a wallet card from the Iowa Department of Labor. The apprenticeship program is a U.S./

Statement Date	05/10/2023
Account Number	1234567
Payment Due	06/01/2023

Service Summary	
Previous Balance	\$199.95
Payments Received 05/01/2023	\$199.95
Balance Forward	\$0.00
Current Charges	\$145.41
Total Amount Due	\$145.41

Message from ECI REC
Notice of 2022 Deferred Patronage Allocation
 2022 Allocation \$47.45
 Current Balance \$994.40
 Your current balance represents your equity in the cooperative and will be refunded to you over time as determined by the Board of Directors.

Phone #: 123-456-7890	
Services	Rate Number and Description
05/01/2023	31 FARM AND RESIDENTIAL



Deferred patronage dividends shown on this bill message from ECI REC cannot be applied to your energy bill.

As an owner, you provide equity to the Cooperative by allowing us to use this money for a period of time. We use it to repay our long-term debt, finance additions and upgrades to the distribution system, repair storm damage, and cover other contingencies. This amount is not cash sitting in an account; it is not payable at this time. It will be refunded to you at some point in the future as the Cooperative's financial condition allows.

Please notify us of any changes in your address. This will allow us to forward any patronage dividends to you, even if you are no longer a member. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 877-850-4343 or email ecirec@ecirec.coop.

Iowa Department of Labor-registered program. It is a four-year, 7,000-hour commitment that provides lineworkers with occupation-related instruction and hands-on experience.

Colton Wolfe and Colton Dietrick both work out of the Independence Operations Center and have been with ECI REC for five years. Congratulations to you both!

GARY MCKENNA, DIRECTOR - Gary has earned his Board Leadership Certificate! The second part of the program, which Gary just completed, consists of a series of 12 courses with an in-depth focus on specific industry and governance issues like risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology, and policy development. A director earns their certificate when they have: 1) completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director program, 2) earned 10 credits from a choice of over 20 Board Leadership Certificate courses.



Dane Peterson



Colton Wolfe



Colton Dietrick



Gary McKenna

Photo credit (lineworkers): Lisa Franck

Photo credit: Teresa Floyd

Vote in the ECI REC Board Election!

IT'S TIME TO VOTE! ECI REC's Board election will get underway on May 26, when voting opens. Voting will remain open until June 26. Results will be announced at this year's Annual Meeting of the Members, which will be held virtually via Zoom on June 28.

"Members, your vote does matter! While we will not yet have the opportunity to gather in person and vote, we've extended our voting window this year, and we are offering members three ways to cast their ballots," said CEO Teresa Floyd. "We hope you'll join us for our livestream and take part in guiding our Cooperative's future!"

In today's challenging environment, cooperative leaders carry a significant responsibility. Over the past year, we've been reminded how incredibly essential our utilities are. ECI REC is blessed to have a Board of Directors that is both prepared to power through obstacles and excited to find ways to power possibilities.

We've created a page on our website dedicated to the Annual Meeting. Look for the yellow button at the top of the home page at ecirec.coop. For more detailed information on how to attend the meeting, how to vote, and this year's prizes, see the back cover. 

OUR MISSION
To demonstrate the advantages of the cooperative business model



OUR VISION
To make a difference in the lives of those we serve



virtual meeting

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

10:30 a.m. - Login opens

11:00 a.m. - Business meeting begins

meeting agenda

Call to Order

Invocation

Introduction of Directors

Steve Rau, President

Reading of Affidavit of Mailing of Notice of Annual Meeting

Ryan Kress, Secretary/Treasurer

Approval of Agenda

Ryan Kress, Secretary/Treasurer

Minutes of Last Annual Meeting

Ryan Kress, Secretary/Treasurer

Introduction of Attorney

Steve Rau, President

Reading of the Nominating

Committee Minutes and Election Results

Julie Pulkrabek, Attorney

Adjournment of Business Meeting



Thank You to the Nominating Committee

a Cooperative Difference highlight

Photo credit: Katie Stadheim

CEO Teresa Floyd leads a virtual Nominating Committee meeting in February. The members of the committee included: Robert Hanson (District 1), Peggy Bearbower (District 2), Clint Sandburg (District 3), David Inman (District 4), Ernie Henderson (District 6), Randy Merkel (District 8), Gary Maurer (District 9), and Carl Dodge (District 10).

Thank you for supporting our democratic governance!

EACH YEAR, the ECI REC Board of Directors selects members from their individual districts to serve on the Nominating Committee. The purpose of the committee is to nominate one to two ECI REC members as candidates for the upcoming Board election.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank this year's Nominating Committee for their efforts. They met virtually with CEO Teresa Floyd on February 16 to prepare for the election. 

Financials

2022 President & CEO Report Resilient Roots, Sustained Commitment

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE

REVENUE	2022	2021
Operating Revenue & Patronage Capital	\$23,860,298	\$21,620,805
EXPENSE		
Purchased Power	\$14,173,119	\$12,009,951
Distribution Expenses - Operations	\$2,274,858	\$2,116,165
Distribution Expenses - Maintenance	\$657,492	\$634,864
Customer Accounts Expense	\$445,937	\$405,742
Customer Service & Informational Expense	\$560,820	\$394,476
Administrative & General Expense	\$1,319,691	\$1,235,671
Depreciation	\$2,577,474	\$2,486,997
Taxes - Other	\$0	\$21,579
Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$1,428,023	\$1,355,605
Other Deductions & Interest Expense	\$64,013	\$62,240
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$23,501,427	\$20,723,290
Operating Margins	\$358,871	\$897,517
Non-Operating Margins	\$850,471	\$64,035
Generation & Transmission Capital Credits	\$288,856	\$621,715
Other Capital Credits & Patronage Dividends	\$244,300	\$244,300
Total Operating & Non-Operating Margins	\$1,742,498	\$1,825,740

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	2022	2021
Current Assets & Other Debits	\$16,264,383	\$15,133,672
Fixed Assets (Net Utility Plant)	\$67,070,411	\$63,735,561
Total Assets & Other Debits	\$83,334,794	\$78,869,233
LIABILITIES		
Total Current & Accrued Liabilities	\$6,222,281	\$4,380,666
Total Fixed Long-Term Debt & Deferred Credits	\$37,372,701	\$35,947,691
Total Margins & Equities	\$39,739,812	\$38,540,876
Total Liabilities & Other Credits	\$83,334,794	\$78,869,233

COMPARATIVE OPERATING STATISTICS

Miles of Line Energized	2,296	2,291
New Services Connected	117	136
Total Services in Place	9,813	9,756
kWhs Purchased from CIPCO	237,286,671	221,551,723
Cost Power Purchased	\$14,155,294	\$11,993,282
Percent Line Loss	4.5%	4.64%
OPERATING REVENUE		
Average kWhs Used per Month per Consumer	2,159	2,038
Average Monthly Bill	\$216.68	\$198.46
Average Cost per kWh to Consumer	\$0.1004	\$0.0974
LOAN FUNDS		
CFC	\$35,942,449	\$34,654,677
Other	\$726,723	\$775,126
Total Loan Funds	\$36,669,172	\$35,429,803



STEVE RAU,
President



TERESA FLOYD,
CEO

THE PAST YEAR certainly ended more quietly than it began—and we are very grateful for that! You may recall that on March 5, 2022, ECI REC’s Vinton Operations Center sustained damage from an EF1 tornado that passed through Benton County. Thankfully, no one was in the building at the time of the evening storm. However, there was significant damage to the overhead doors, roof, and side walls of the facility.

While of course we’d rather the tornado had never touched down, it provided a perfect demonstration of the resilient roots and sustained commitment of your Cooperative. All outages from the storm were promptly restored, and all

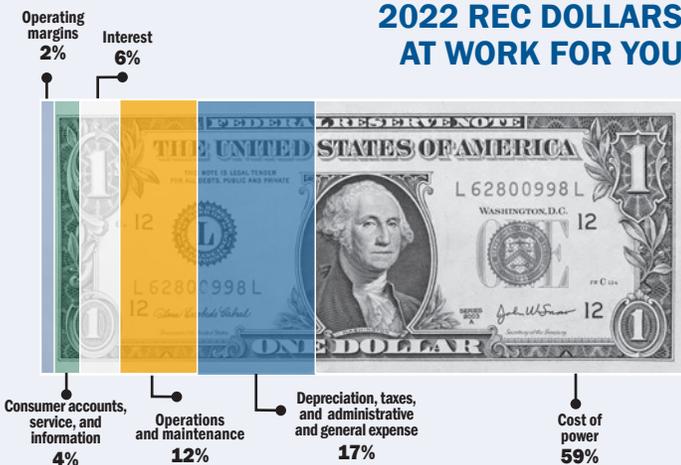
the damage at our Vinton facility has been repaired. Given the types of repairs that were needed, we had the opportunity to update the facility’s insulation, install more efficient doors and windows, and upgrade the shop lighting to LED fixtures. These upgrades are energy efficient and will save the Cooperative money over time on our electricity costs. Turn to page 10 to see photos of the restored buildings.

We could not be more proud of the strength, camaraderie, and loyalty shown by our team in the wake of that tornado. We carried this spirit through the rest of the year, never losing sight of our core objective: providing our membership with safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable power. The remainder of this message will cover some of the successes and challenges we experienced in 2022.

We tallied just 56 outage minutes per member last year, the third fewest in ECI REC’s history. We also continued to make great progress on our five-year, \$22.4 million Construction Work Plan (2021–2025). As part of this plan, 42.8 miles of distribution line were replaced by Highline Construction, Inc. ECI REC invested approximately \$2.7 million in these replacements. CRC Trenching also completed cable replacements. This work happened in conjunction with the Spring Creek substation circuit breaker upgrades.

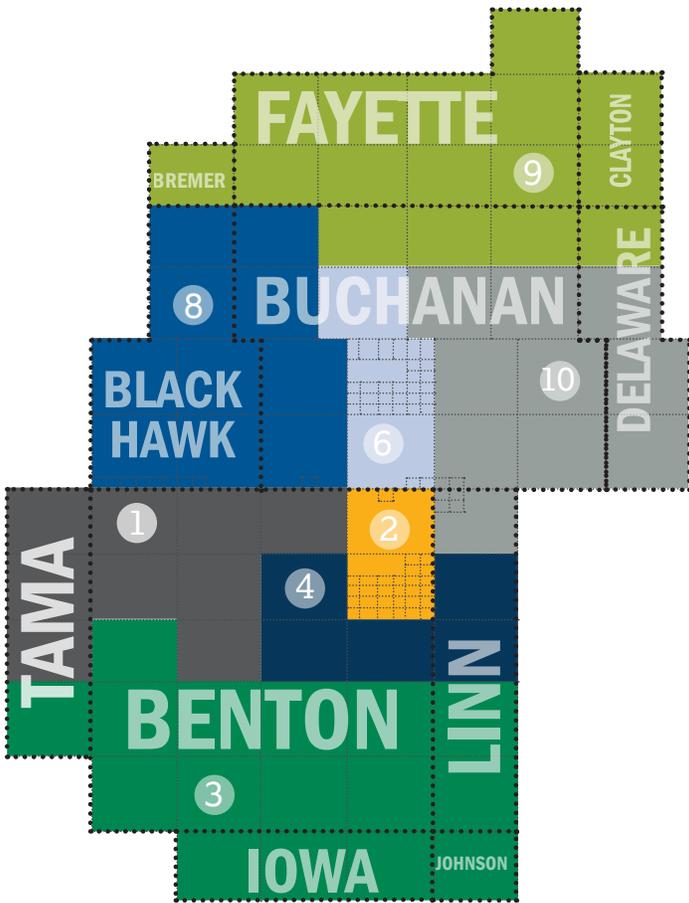
As part of the 2022 budget, your Board of Directors approved the purchase of the IAEC’s Safety Gold services. That purchase covers an overall upgrade to the safety services ECI REC receives from the IAEC, including operating procedures, the Regulatory Compliance Group Model Safety program, and the Safety Sentinel Safety Coordina-

2022 REC DOLLARS AT WORK FOR YOU



continued on page 10

Your District Map & Board of Directors



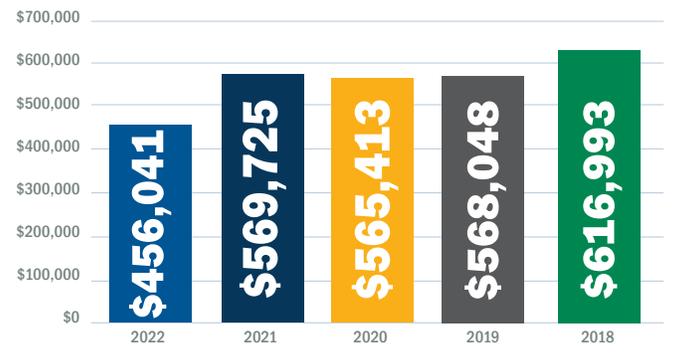
<p>Jeff Elliott Vice President Director since 1990 Board District 1</p> 	<p>Julie Kester Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Director since 2019 Board District 2</p> 
<p>Brian McNulty Director since 2021 Board District 3</p> 	<p>Gary McKenna Director since 2016 Board District 4</p> 
<p>Don Shonka Director since 2006 Board District 6</p> 	<p>Nick Donlea Director since 2018 Board District 8</p> 
<p>Steve Rau President Director since 2005 Board District 9</p> 	<p>Ryan Kress Secretary/Treasurer Director since 2009 Board District 10</p> 

2022 Work Plan Improvements Budget

- New services construction: **\$138,978**
- 42.8 miles of line replacement: **\$2,658,208**
- Substation upgrades: **\$50,000**
- New transformers, meters, & special equipment: **\$445,392**
- Service upgrades: **\$156,297**
- Sectionalizing equipment (such as breakers & fuses): **\$80,000**
- Pole, equipment, & conductor replacements: **\$869,744**
- Security lights: **\$30,826**
- Technology: **\$30,000**

5-Year Patronage History Returning Your Investment

Since ECI REC is a nonprofit organization, you pay for electricity at cost. Any margins left over at the end of the year, after all expenses are covered, are allocated to you by your Board of Directors in the form of patronage dividends!



7 Cooperative Principles

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community



Photo credit: Lisa Franck

2022 PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT *continued from page 8*

tor’s training (with 12 in-person safety meetings and an unlimited apprentice training program).

In January 2022, your Board President represented the Cooperative at the Welcome Back Legislative session along with Director Don Shonka. This event is always a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators to discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve.

Over the course of 2022, ECI REC members earned \$6,119 for recycling inefficient working appliances. Your Cooperative also distributed \$120,118 in energy efficiency rebates. Thanks to these rebates, members saved 573,877 kWh of energy.

Your Cooperative has been very fortunate to be able to retire deferred patronage for 23 of the past 26 years. At its May 2022 meeting, your Board of Directors approved the retirement of \$456,041—100% of 2007 margins—to members of the Cooperative. In June, 6,010 member-accounts that got electricity from ECI REC in 2007 received money back. These dollars represent your share of the deferred patronage dividends (profits) the Cooperative earned that year. In the past 10 years, ECI REC has returned \$5,264,649 to its membership.

We know our Cooperative functions most effectively with committed and informed leadership. Following the 27th Annual Meeting of the Members in June, the Board held its reorganization meeting. The following were re-elected to office: Steve Rau, president; Jeff Elliott, vice president; Ryan Kress, secretary/treasurer; and Julie Kester, assistant secretary/treasurer. Both your Board President and Director Jeff Elliott earned their Director Gold Renewal Certificates in the past year.

Finally, ECI REC completed its cost-of-service study in 2022. Wholesale power costs have been increasing, and they are expected to continue to rise in 2023. This study looked at current rates and costs, as well as the future needs of the Cooperative. From these projections, it was determined that rates must increase to support the increased expenses and margin requirements to provide safe and reliable energy to our members.

At the November 2022 meeting, the Board of Directors approved an overall rate increase of 5%. The increase went into effect on March 1, 2023. The cost of security lights leased from the Cooperative also increased 50 cents (\$0.50) per month. Most rate classes saw an increase in the Facility Charge, a monthly charge that represents the fixed costs

of making electricity available to your meter 24/7. Additionally, all rate classes moved to one Energy Charge (kWh). Your Cooperative’s strategy was to work toward recovering our fixed costs via the Facility Charge and to simplify the Energy Charge (or electric rates). These two changes aligned with this goal.

We continue to keep our members informed about things like the recent rate increase through several channels, including the *Heartland Link*, e-newsletters, Facebook, ecirec.coop, bill inserts, and newspaper ads. An informed and educated membership is in our best interest as a locally owned cooperative!

In 2023, our Annual Meeting of the Members will again be held virtually. Members will have the option to cast their ballot online or via mail. For more details on voting and attending the June 28 meeting, see the back page.

The core purpose and mission of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative is to provide our members with safe, reliable, and environmentally friendly electricity. We rely on our resilience and the commitment of our team to fulfill this goal, no matter what challenges arise. Above all, we are dedicated to putting our membership first, and we remain motivated to serve our communities. We thank you for your trust and support. 

2022 ECI REC Year-End Stats

9,159

member-accounts

7,241

memberships

11,305

AMI meters

\$33,502

donated to 38 causes

2,296 miles

of overhead and underground distribution line

24 substations

owned and maintained by ECI REC

839

Facebook fans and 950 followers

\$12,000

given through twelve \$1,000 scholarships for graduating seniors

\$0.00097620/kWh

of 2022 revenue invested in energy efficiency programs

70 members

contributed an average of \$4/month supporting Iowa renewable energy production

\$5.20

average cost residential members spent each day for electricity

68 members

cared with ECI's RECare program, giving \$7,354

3,014

registered SmartHub users

YOUR BOARD

Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
(2022/2023 Vice President)

Board District 2 - Julie Kester
(2022/2023 Asst. Secretary/
Treasurer)

Board District 3 - Brian McNulty

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna

Board District 6 - Don Shonka

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

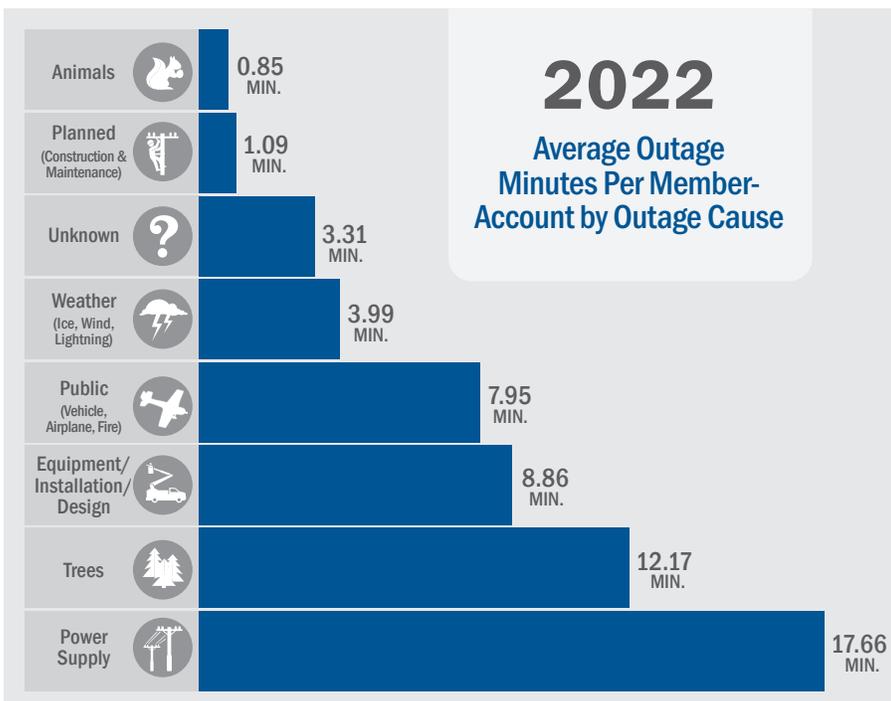
Board District 9 - Steve Rau
(2022/2023 President)

Board District 10 - Ryan Kress
(2022/2023 Secretary/
Treasurer)

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the July/August 2023 *Heartland Link* must be received by June 1, 2023.

East-Central Iowa REC will publish non-commercial advertisements as a service to our members. All ads are free. They may be submitted by any member or employee of East-Central Iowa REC. Ads should contain a phone number, name (if desired), a brief description of items with price if applicable. Each ad is limited to maximum of 50 words; please type or print clearly. Editor reserves the right to edit or reject any ad. No ads will be taken over the telephone—please email, mail, or bring your ad to the office.



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East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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.

PERIODICALS

Find tools for members at
www.ecirec.coop



24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub
See account information at ecirec.smarthub.coop or download the app.



Outage Center & Map
View current outages via SmartHub or at 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 or call 811.



Co-op Connections®
Get discounts on everyday expenses. Visit www.connections.coop or download the mobile app.



Heartland Link E-Newsletter
Email 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.

VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

Resilient Roots, Sustained Commitment

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

How Do I Attend?

Visit ecirec.coop and look for the yellow button at the top of the home page, which will take you to the Annual Meeting of the Members page. Look for the green JOIN NOW button. The virtual meeting room will open at 10:30 a.m.

How Do I Vote?

On May 26, ballots will be mailed and online voting will open. All votes—online and mail-in—MUST be received by June 26.

- 1** MAIL - A ballot will be mailed to every member with a self-addressed and stamped return envelope.*
- 2** SMART HUB - Log in to SmartHub at ecirec.smarthub.coop and click VOTE NOW. Please note: SmartHub voting must be done in a web browser, not the SmartHub mobile app.
- 3** ONLINE - Click the blue VOTE NOW button located on the home page at ecirec.coop. Enter your voter number and election passcode, which will be listed at the bottom of your mailed ballot. Follow online voting instructions.

*ECI REC partnered with Diamond/OSG to administer the Annual Meeting mailing and ballot validation processes. They will tabulate all the ballots, both paper and online.

Are There Prizes?

Of course! Twelve \$50 bill credits and two \$100 bill credits will be given away as grand prizes this year.