

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

NOMINATE NOW

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Committee now taking names for 2020 Board elections.

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thank you

“Thank you for the timely assistance with moving my grain bin and exchanging my transformer.”

DOUG DVORAK

“We just want to say thank you to everyone at ECI REC. Your service has always been top-notch.

Whenever we had a problem, someone was always there to promptly help.” **JERRY AND NAOMI BIRD**

2020 pocket calendars

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

take the
member challenge

1. **COMMUNITY CONNECTED:** The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program provides funding for rural projects through local ____ organizations.

2. **LOOKING OUT FOR YOU:** Locally owned electric co-ops and the lowans they serve should not receive a ____ for stepping up to restore power after a natural disaster.

3. **SAFETY:** If you come upon an accident involving ____, do not approach the accident scene.

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 November/December 2019 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

Jeff Cronbaugh

Bernard Schmitz

Lucille Nelson

June & Donn Folkmann

Dennis G. Williams

Jeff & Debra Dufoe

Larry W. Johnson

Terry Benda

Kevin R. James

Alfred Williams, Jr.

Calvin Harks

Jerome Tempel

Richard Hare

Aaron & Allison Schutte

Charles Kress

Loras Overmann

Calendar Notes

1/01 – 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

Steve Marlow
Chief Executive Officer
Ext. 421
steve.marlow@ecirec.coop

Teresa Floyd
Manager of Finance
and Consumer Service
Ext. 450
teresa.floyd@ecirec.coop

Tom Schmitt
Line Superintendent
Ext. 519
tom.schmitt@ecirec.coop

Adam Albertsen
Director of Member
Service
Ext. 503
adam.albertsen@ecirec.coop

Lisa Franck
Manager of
Communications
Ext. 472
lisa.franck@ecirec.coop

Nathan Groom
Information System
Administrator
Ext. 410
nathan.groom@ecirec.coop

ADDRESS

2400 Bing Miller Lane
PO Box 248
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)



OPERATIONS NEWS
OUTAGE UPDATES

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

COVER STORY

The ECI REC team presented the \$480,000 check. Left to right: Director of Member Service Adam Albertsen, Manager of Finance/Consumer Service Teresa Floyd, Director Don Shonka, CEO Steve Marlow, Dr. Sarah Gingrich, and Dr. Bob Pipho. Photos by NAME

New Dental Clinic Brings Bright Smiles to ECI REC's Service Area

a Community Connected feature

EAST-CENTRAL IOWA REC invests in the communities we serve in many ways. At the December 2018 meeting, our Board of Directors approved a resolution to apply to secure USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDL&G) funds to provide a loan to support the construction of Pipho and Gingrich Family Dentistry, a new dental clinic in Dysart.

In October, representatives from ECI REC and the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) met with business partners Dr. Bob Pipho and Dr. Sarah Gingrich to finalize the \$480,000 loan documentation. Right across the street from the original building, construction of the new 2,100 square-foot building was well underway. The move to the new office is slated for December.


Upon Dr. Pipho's 2015 acquisition of McLaughlin Family Dentistry in Dysart, he and Dr. Gingrich formed a partnership with goals to expand and upgrade the services they provide. The new building will have five treatment rooms, an image room, a larger front lobby, three restrooms, an employee lounge, and office space, as well as a large lot for convenient patient parking.

The doctors' Iowa roots run deep, as both Pipho and Gingrich are natives of La Porte City and graduates of Union High School and the University of Iowa. Their mission is to

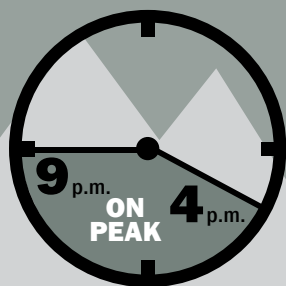
provide high-quality, comprehensive, affordable dental care for the lifetime of their patients in Dysart and the surrounding rural communities, including Traer, Clutier, Tama, Belle Plaine, Waterloo, and Cedar Falls.

Their business location and service area made supporting their initiative for a new clinic a great fit for ECI REC's co-sponsorship of the REDL&G loan, since Cooperative members live in and around these towns. The doctors are also no strangers to electric cooperatives, as Dr. Pipho and his family live on ECI REC lines. Dr. Gingrich was raised on a family farm also served by ECI REC.

Bruce Nuzum, the Iowa Area Development Group's Senior VP of Finance & Operations, was onsite to facilitate the documentation. ECI REC's Director Don Shonka, CEO Steve Marlow, Manager of Finance/Consumer Service Teresa Floyd, and Director of Member Service Adam Albertsen were on hand to present the check.

The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program provides funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. The USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. 

TAKE A LOAD OFF THE PEAK



THIS YEAR Resolve to Curb Energy Use During Peak Hours

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.

Committee Now Taking Nominations for 2020 Board Elections

a Cooperative Difference announcement

AT A RECENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting, each Director of ECI REC selected a member-consumer from their individual district to serve on ECI REC's Nominating Committee. The committee's purpose is to nominate one to two ECI REC members as candidates for the Director positions up for election. The vote will take place at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Members.

There are two positions up for election, one each in Board Districts 1 and 9. 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 representing the 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 district they could potentially represent. All nominations must be registered at the Urbana Administrative Headquarters before 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2020. On that date, all candidates will be reviewed and nominations confirmed at a meeting of the Nominating Committee. 🐣

				Illyria (17) Fayette County	
	Fremont (24) Fayette County	Harlan (25) Fayette County	Smithfield (26) Fayette County	Fairfield (27) Fayette County	Sperry (28) Clayton County
Franklin (33) Bremer County	Oran (34) Fayette County	Jefferson (35) Fayette County	Scott (36) Fayette County	Putnam (37) Fayette County	Cass (38) Clayton County
	Hazleton (45) Buchanan County	Buffalo (46) Buchanan County	Madison (47) Buchanan County	Richland (48) Delaware County	

Geneseo (133) Tama County	Bruce (134) Benton County	Cedar (135) Benton County	Harrison (136) Benton County
Clark (143) Tama County	Monroe (144) Benton County	Jackson (145) Benton County	
Oneida (153) Tama County		Big Grove (155) Benton County	

BOARD DISTRICT 1

Currently represented by Jeff Elliott, La Porte City

Serving: Geneseo, Clark, and Oneida Townships in Tama County; Big Grove, Bruce, Cedar, Harrison, Monroe, and Jackson Townships in Benton County.

Nominating Contact:

Robert Hanson

5071 15th Ave.

La Porte City, IA 50651

Text/Phone: (319) 560-9933

Email: rahanson@lpctel.net

BOARD DISTRICT 9

Currently represented by Steve Rau, Stanley

Serving: Fremont, Harlan, Oran, Illyria, Smithfield, Fairfield, Jefferson, Scott, and Putnam Townships in Fayette County; Sperry and Cass Townships in Clayton County; Hazleton, Madison, and Buffalo Townships in Buchanan County; Richland Township in Delaware County; Franklin Township in Bremer County.

Nominating Contact:

Dan Sperfslage

2514 130th St.

Aurora, IA 50607

Text/Phone: (563) 920-5702

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting of the Members

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Independence High School, Independence

Registration begins at 10:30 a.m.

Business meeting begins at 11:00 a.m.

Powering
Tomorrow With
Today's Innovations

House of Representatives Passes RURAL Act

a Looking Out for You update

ON DECEMBER 17, the House of Representatives passed the RURAL Act, protecting more than 900 electric cooperatives across the nation from the risk of losing their tax-exempt status when they accept government grants for disaster relief, broadband service, and other programs that benefit cooperative members. The Senate is poised to pass the bill later this week, and President Trump is expected to sign it into law.

The RURAL Act was NRECA's top legislative priority for the year because of the profound threat the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act posed to the business model of not-for-profit cooperatives. Passed by Congress in 2017, the legislation redefined government grants to cooperatives as income rather than capital. That change made it difficult for many cooperatives to abide by the 15% limit on non-member income to keep their tax-exempt status.

Lawmakers acknowledged that the threat to electric co-ops was an unintended consequence of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The RURAL Act exempts grants from being counted as income and is retroactive to the 2018 tax year.

Without the fix, some co-ops would have had to start paying taxes this spring after receiving grants in 2018 or 2019 to repair storm damage, bring high-speed internet to rural communities, or invest in renewable energy and energy-efficiency programs. Many cooperative leaders feared they would have to raise rates for members to pay the new taxes.

For Iowans the potential impact was especially concerning. In our state, weather can be unpredictable and unrelenting. When disaster strikes and the lights go out, cooperatives frequently rely

on government assistance to recover from the damage and restore power quickly. If the damage is severe enough, the co-op may also seek assistance to help mitigate future threats by using grants to help "storm harden" the grid. Without the RURAL Act, Iowa's electric cooperatives may have had to choose between losing their tax-exempt status or walking away from needed funds.

According to Chuck Soderberg—Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives Executive Vice President and General Manager—among the 45 member cooperatives of IAEC, roughly 650,000 Iowans in all 99 counties could have felt the impacts of this tax increase. If the tax law changes had been in place over the past decade, several electric cooperatives across Iowa would have been in danger of losing their tax-exempt status for accepting FEMA assistance following natural



Chuck Soderberg

disasters like flooding or ice storms.

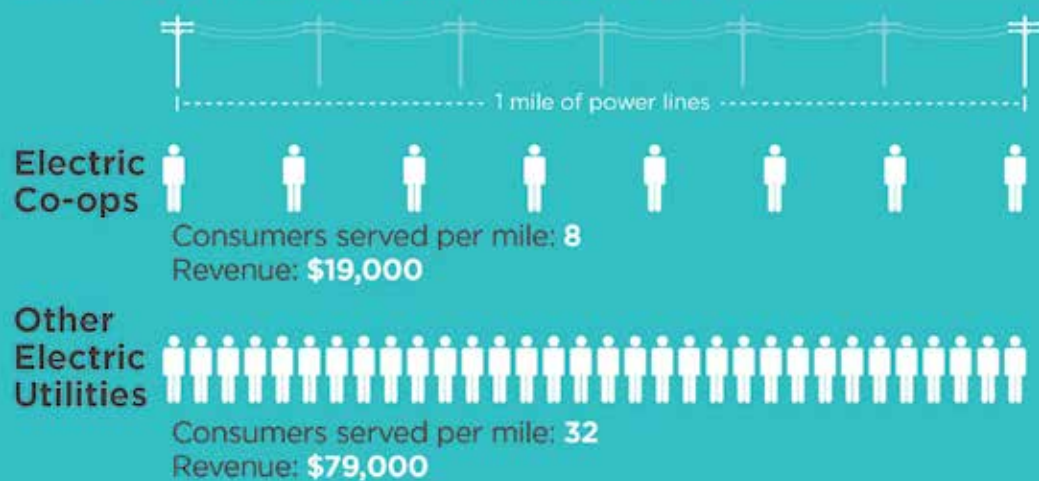
Tens of thousands of cooperative leaders, employees, and members across the country rallied to advocate passage of the RURAL Act. The bipartisan legislation was co-sponsored by nearly all of Iowa's congressional delegation, including Senator Ernst and Representatives Axne, Finkenauer, King, and Loebsack. We thank them for their support. Senator Grassley chairs the Finance Committee in the U.S. Senate, which had jurisdiction over this proposed bill because it deals with the tax code.

NRECA lobbyist Paul Gutierrez credited the victory to a collaborative campaign strategy that included cooperatives' grassroots efforts to alert their senators and representatives to the issue.

"This was an amazing NRECA team and membership effort, including co-op members at the end of the line," he said. "We had great legislative champions in the House and Senate, and they worked tirelessly to get this included in the final tax package." 🙌

Going the Extra Mile

Electric cooperatives maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other types of electric utilities. Even though they serve fewer consumers and acquire less revenue, electric co-ops always go the extra mile to power the communities they serve.



Source: 2016-2017 data provided by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)



ECI REC Supports Energy Efficiency

an Energy Wise feature

IOWA'S LOCALLY OWNED electric cooperatives have a long history of supporting energy efficiency; in fact, we've been offering cost-effective energy efficiency programs since the late 1980s. These programs include rebates and incentives for various energy-efficient products, such as ENERGY STAR® appliances, water heaters, LED lighting, and heating and cooling systems.


East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative also offers programs designed to reduce electric demand, such as our residential, agricultural, and commercial rebates and incentives. Additionally, your electric cooperative continues to upgrade facilities to maximize efficiency, including more efficient transformers and upgrades to substations. Generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity more efficiently helps ECI REC manage costs

more effectively, ultimately resulting in lower utility bills for our members. Iowa's electric cooperatives work in cooperation with other cooperatives to more effectively deliver energy efficiency programs to members. By partnering with other cooperatives, energy efficiency programs can be developed and delivered more effectively and at a lower cost than ECI REC could do alone.

Working together with other community-focused cooperatives, ECI REC assesses the costs and benefits of each program to determine what to offer our members. Standardly, we perform four benefit-cost tests to determine the cost-effectiveness of the program. First, the participant cost test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of the participant in the program. Second,

the utility cost test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of ECI REC. Third, the ratepayer impact cost test, also referred to as the RIM test, determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of co-op members who do not participate in the program. Finally, the societal test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of society in general.

Ultimately, ECI REC invests in energy efficiency programs to benefit the communities we serve. Your electric cooperative invested \$.0138259 per kWh, or 1.35% of its total revenue for 2018, in energy efficiency programs.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to learn more about energy efficiency, please contact us at 319-443-4343 and ask to speak with a member service representative. 

Years of Service Honorees



40 YEARS

Teresa Schremser
Operations
Assistant



25 YEARS

John Tegler
Member Service
Technician



20 YEARS

Brian Reidy
Lineworker



20 YEARS

Kelly Pohlmann
Consumer Service
Supervisor



15 YEARS

Ben Donnelly
Lineworker




10 YEARS

Ryan Kress
Secretary/Treasurer/
Director

Ring in 2020 With New Rebates From ECI REC an Energy Wise feature

GET 2020 OFF TO A GREAT START by taking advantage of ECI REC's extensive rebate incentive program. We offer rebates for residential, commercial, and agricultural Cooperative members.

Residential rebates are listed below. Ag members can get cash back on things like livestock ventilation equipment, and commercial members can save when choosing efficient kitchen equipment, amongst other things.

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 service department at 877-850-4343. 

Find rebate information and forms by clicking Rebates & Incentives in the gray bar on the home page at www.ecirec.coop.

2020 RESIDENTIAL REBATES

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 (min. 1.5 ton, SEER 15.0, HSPF 8.5, EER 12.5)

Geothermal Heat Pump

- » Closed-Loop System: \$400/ton
- » Open-Loop System: \$300/ton (no "pump & dump" systems)
- » Unit Replacement: \$150/ton

ENERGY STAR Central Air Conditioning

- » ENERGY STAR-Qualified: \$100/unit (min. SEER 15.0 & EER 12.5)
- Limit two A/C rebates per account.*

Indoor Air Quality

- » Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV): \$250/unit
- Limit two HRVs per account.*

Heat Pump Water Heater

- » ENERGY STAR Integrated Unit: \$650/unit

High-Efficiency Electric Water Heater

- » Electric Storage Unit: \$75/unit (40 gal. tank min., EF \geq 0.90)
- » Geothermal Assisted Storage Unit: \$150/unit (40 gal. tank min., EF \geq 0.90)

Additional incentives may apply for first-time Heat Plus members.

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.*

ENERGY STAR Appliances

ENERGY STAR Washer

- » Unit replacement, and water heater is electric: \$40/unit

ENERGY STAR Clothes Dryer

- » Unit replacement: \$20/unit

Interior Lighting

- » ENERGY STAR Hard-Wired or LED Fixtures w/screw-in adapters: 50% of price up to \$5/fixture
- Account limit of \$600 applied over a 5-year period (installs prior to 1/1/15 are exempt).*

Outdoor Security Lighting

ENERGY STAR or DesignLight Consortium Qualified LED Fixtures

- » 20-34W: \$10/fixture
- » 35-49W: \$20/fixture
- » 50-74W: \$40/fixture
- » 75-124W: \$50/fixture
- » \geq 125W: \$60/fixture

Electric Vehicle Chargers

- » Level II Charger (240/208 volt input supply) installation: 50% up to \$500

Limit one rebate per account.

WEATHERIZATION

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 account: \$2,200*

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation: 15% up to \$150
 - » Wall Insulation: 15% up to \$150
- Maximum incentive per account: \$300*

LIHEAP-QUALIFIED MEMBERS

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 account: \$2,800*

Central AC Only (non-electric heating)

- » Attic/Ceiling Insulation: 20% up to \$150
 - » Wall Insulation: 20% up to \$150
- Maximum incentive per account: \$300*

REQUIREMENTS (LIHEAP AND NON-LIHEAP)

- » Must have electric heat and/or central air (homes with natural gas do not qualify).
- » Home must be built prior to 2000.
- » 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).

MORE REBATES & INCENTIVES

BUILDING A HOME? Learn more about additional incentives for new home construction at www.ecirec.coop.

INSTALLED GEOTHERMAL? Taxpayers who had a geothermal heat pump installed at their residence on or after January 1, 2019, can apply for the Geothermal Heat Pump Tax Credit with the Iowa Department of Revenue. Applications are due May 1, 2020, for installations completed by December 31, 2019. The credit is equal to 20% of the federal residential energy efficient property tax credit allowed for geothermal heat pumps. For more info, visit: www.tax.iowa.gov/heat-pump-tax-credit.

A High-Voltage Collision: Safety Course Saved Students' Lives

a Safety story



WHEN TEENAGERS Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor attended a power line safety demonstration at their high school, they never dreamed what they learned that day would be put to test. Just days later, Whittaker and Taylor, along with two classmates, were in a car that crashed into



a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

"When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on their minds," explained Molly Hall, Executive Director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program. "We're usually more concerned about whether anyone is injured or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We can forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

If you are in an accident with a utility pole, your vehicle may be charged with electricity. If that's the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. Loose wires and other

equipment may be in contact with your car or near it, creating a risk for electrocution if you leave the vehicle.

Downed lines sometimes reveal they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity. However, power lines do not always show signs they are live, but they are just as lethal. After an accident:

- » Stay in the car and tell others to do the same.
- » If you come upon an accident involving power lines, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay away.
- » Call 911 to notify emergency personnel and utility services.
- » Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe to do so.

The safest place to be is almost always inside the car. The only circumstance when you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire—and those instances are rare. If you must exit the vehicle, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to "bunny hop" with your feet together to safety. This technique will ensure you are at only one point of contact and will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another, which can be deadly.



The scene of an accident involving an electric utility pole in the ECI REC service area. The collision caused a power outage.

Ashley, Lee, and their friends survived their accident because they had learned what to do. While they waited more than 30 minutes for line crews to arrive and deactivate the power line, Whittaker and Taylor made sure nobody left the car and warned those who came upon the accident to stay far away.

"Knowledge was crucial in keeping everyone involved in the accident safe," said Hall. "We want to make sure everyone knows what to do if they're in accidents with power poles."


To see Lee and Ashley's story, visit SafeElectricity.org.



New Oil Switches at BECCA Substation

In late October and early November, ECI REC line crews worked to change out two pad-mount oil switches at the BECCA substation. The two new oil switches replaced four 24-year-old, open-air, pad-mount switches. Maintenance tests had indicated that the older switches' insulators were starting to fail and had reached the end of their useful life. The new oil switches assure improved reliability. Pictured above: Kevin Walton, Josh Cox, and Bryce Burroughs.

**ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG**



**IOWA 811
ONE CALLSM**

800-292-8989

Don't Forget to Set Up Your Online Co-Op Connections® Account!


a Community Connected reminder



THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS WEBSITE is robust, easy-to-use, and member-focused. When you set up an online account, you have easy access to:

- » Healthy savings, co-op deals, and national discounts
- » Online shopping platforms with cash back
- » Resources for booking hotels, concerts, and sporting events

To register, visit www.connections.coop. In the top righthand corner, you'll find a sign-up button. After clicking, you'll be taken through the steps of creating a personalized dashboard featuring your profile information, your history of savings and cash back, and your saved offers.

If you have questions about setting up your Co-Op Connections account, please call 877-850-4343 or email ecirec@ecirec.coop. 

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 the 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.

Is Your Account Phone Number(s) Current?

Did you know our consumer software links your account information with your primary and secondary phone numbers? If you call to report an outage or a concern, our personnel can help you more quickly if your number(s) in these two fields are current. In today's mobile world, you may want to consider updating your primary and secondary phone numbers, especially if you have:

- ✓ Disconnected your landline, or you do not use it as a primary point of contact
- ✓ Changed your cell phone number or provider

Complete the form below and return it to: ECI REC, Info Update, PO Box 248, Urbana, IA 52345



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

Member Account Notification Update

Name on account(s) below: _____

Member account #: _____

Primary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Secondary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Other notification comments: _____

Member account #: _____

Primary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Secondary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Other notification comments: _____

Member account #: _____

Primary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Secondary Notification #: _____

Device: ☐ Cell/Mobile ☐ Landline

Other notification comments: _____

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

Applications Now Available

Tips for Better Time Management

a Looking Out for You feature

ARE YOU BUSY? Would you like ideas for better time management to do more with what little time you have? Let's stop wasting time and get to it!

Eliminate time-wasters and distractions. Modern life has many distractions. If you know you'll be tempted to check Twitter or anticipate too many knocks at your office door, take steps to limit interruptions before you start. Close all programs and tabs except those you need. Let coworkers know you need to focus, then close your door or put on noise-canceling headphones. Put your phone in a drawer.

Plan ahead. Before a big day, sit down and make a plan. Make the day feel less stressful and frantic by picking out what you'll wear, pre-packing your lunch, checking to make sure your bags are packed with everything you need, and reviewing your itinerary (including transit schedules, directions, meetings, and after-school activities). Also remember to put fuel in your car and your body and make sure you have enough time between things.

Before beginning a project, create a plan of action with estimates for how much time each task or portion will take. It will prepare you mentally for the work, allowing you to notice and solve time-related problems ahead of time.

Prioritize and set goals. Once you've assessed all you need to accomplish, prioritize urgent and important matters. Set daily or project-based goals based on your priorities. For instance, finding new luggage for your trip can wait a few weeks, but you absolutely must call the plumber before the tiny leak worsens, schedule your semi-annual dental appointment, and research Spacely Sprockets for your boss today.

Track your time. Put a clock in a prominent place or use a timer to keep you on task. Stop when the time you've allocated is over and move on to the next task. Be sure you allocate time for breaks and transitions between tasks.

Don't multitask—focus. Studies have shown that multitasking, or task-switching, isn't as productive as focusing on a single task. In fact, it increases the time it takes you to complete tasks and the number of errors you make. The more difficult or complex a task is, the more time you'll lose and the more errors you'll make if you try to multitask, losing up to 40% of your productivity.

Group similar tasks together (responding to emails, texts, chat messages, and phone messages in the same block of time, for instance) to further cut the negative effects that task-switching can have on your work.


Delegate or outsource. Productivity is not worth your sanity. If you cannot reasonably accomplish everything on your to-do list, enlist help. Delegate appropriate tasks to your coworkers, spouse, and children. Ask a friend or neighbor for help. Outsource big jobs that take too much time or energy, like yard work, or use services that take tasks off your plate, like grocery delivery or laundry services. 

Photo by Emma Mathews

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.



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 26.



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 lineworker, 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 4.


number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll depend upon ECI REC for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

The good news? Even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain—especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates, and education have increased at rates of 3% or more per year. Butter, meat, and egg costs have gone up by more than 1% and 2% percent annually, and even bread costs have risen better than a half point on average.

Electricity costs rise about 1% a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. That means we're doing more things with less energy. Kilowatt-hour use per household also dropped by 8% between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9% decline reported by all electric utilities nationwide.

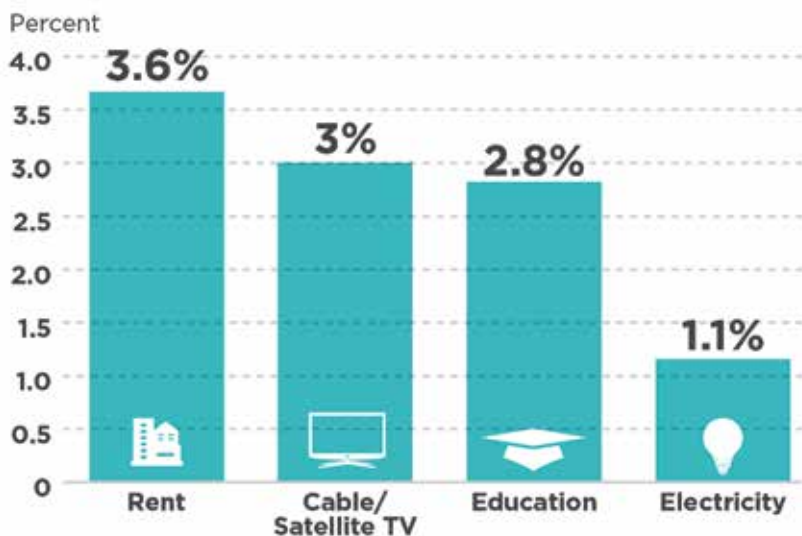
When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner. We're always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why ECI REC urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances, and promotes technology designed to give members more control over their electricity use. We also recommend tools that help us reduce the overall power demand, like energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most water heating, laundry, and dishwashing outside peak rate periods. These options give you opportunities to control or even trim your monthly utility bills. That's good for families, couples, and individuals trying to live within their budgets.

At ECI REC, we're always working to provide service that's reliable, affordable, and valuable to our members—to you, your family, and your neighbors. 

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2013-2018



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



YOUR BOARD



Board District 1 - Jeff Elliott
(2019/2020 Vice President)

Board District 2 - Julie Kester

Board District 3 - Allen Albers

Board District 4 - Gary McKenna
(2019/2020 Asst. Secretary/Treasurer)

Board District 6 - Don Shonka

Board District 8 - Nick Donlea

Board District 9 - Steve Rau
(2019/2020 President)

Board District 10 - Ryan Kress
(2019/2020 Secretary/Treasurer)

CLASSIFIEDS: Free to members only

WANT TO BUY: A wringer washing machine in good working condition.
PH: 319-334-9820.

WANTED: Epson printer that uses 220 ink cartridges. PH: 319-551-5771.

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the March/April Heartland Link must be received by February 1, 2020.

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.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



Help us celebrate eight years on Facebook by checking out our page! Go to facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec and like our page

to get our posts about outages, safety tips, and more on your News Feed today!

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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.

Members get connected at www.ecirec.coop



24-Hour Bill Pay With SmartHub
See account information at ecirec.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.



Facebook
Find news and updates at facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec.



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.



FREE Monthly Energy Tips
Sign up at www.myenergytips.com to get the Watts \$mart e-newsletter.



Iowa Rural Power
Join grassroots advocates for Iowa's electric cooperatives. Visit www.iaruralpower.org.



Message From CEO Steve Marlow

The Value of Electricity Continues to Shine

HOW MANY OF US remember dropping into an electric cooperative office to pay the light bill with our parents and grandparents? Whether you do it in person, by mail, or online, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences we enjoy in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside your home. Have you looked around your kitchen lately? There's the standard coffee maker, toaster, microwave, and electric skillet. If you've got a craft nook or workshop, the power tools and machines you use to cut and shape your projects are plugged in and recharged. Whether your devices get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps them working comes from ECI REC.

And what about the internet-connected technologies that have become so important in our lives? Count up your televisions, desktops, laptops, tablets, and printers. Take stock of your gaming consoles, music and video players, and personal assistant devices. The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices. That