

heartland LINK

A publication of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

REMODELING HQ page 4

Urbana front lobby gets security makeover that also creates more usable space.



TREE PLANTING GUIDE page 6

Tips to help you plant the right tree in the right spot.

ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS page 8

Electric water heaters offer six great benefits over gas models.

IOWA CO-OPS' AGENDA page 9

Iowa electric co-ops announce 2020 legislative priorities.



Strong 2019 Propels 2020 Work Plan and Maintenance Projects

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our members say thank you

“We would like to compliment the crew that came to our farm to change our transformer and put in a new line. We were very impressed by how careful they were about not tearing up any more of our lawn than they had to. They left the area cleaned up and were very pleasant and efficient.

We'd especially like to thank Hank, John, and Adam for helping us make plans for our new transformer, as well as assisting us with rebates. It was a pleasure to work with all three. They were always pleasant when they answered our questions and concerns.”

MIKE AND MARY GALLERY

take the member challenge

CORRECTION: In the last *Heartland Link*, a last-minute article revision resulted in Member Challenge question #2 not matching the new content. We sincerely apologize for any confusion this caused. It should have read: *Locally owned electric co-ops and the lowans they serve should not receive a tax bill for stepping up to restore power after a natural disaster.*

We are glad to have many devoted readers who called this to our attention!

1. KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: By the end of April, ECI REC Operation Centers will have received almost ____ of overhead conductor.

2. ENERGY WISE: An ____ water heater requires no venting, no gas line, and offers no CO₂ concerns.

3. LOOKING OUT FOR YOU: Iowa's electric cooperatives are ____ of the communities we serve and support.

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 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. 2020 *Heartland Link* entries. These members will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

John Lee
Sara M. Smith
Harry E. Fox
Michael & Kathleen Naylor
Baughman Farms, LLC
Dennis Andresen
John C. Lane
Tiffany Christophel

Ashley L. Martin
Thomas J. Doyle
Chelsea Bearbower
Dennis F. Mills
John Henson
Imogene Vanheuvelen
Thomas Ciesielski
Ada Urice

Calendar Notes

3/8 – Daylight Saving Time

4/5 – Palm Sunday

4/10 – Good Friday

4/12 – Easter

Contact ECI REC

EMAILS

memberservices@ecirec.coop
(rebates, product sales)

csr@ecirec.coop
(billing, new customers)

WEB SITE

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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

Strong 2019 Propels 2020 Work Plan and Maintenance Projects

a Keeping the Lights On feature

AS YOU CAN SEE from the chart to the right below, in 2019, your Cooperative experienced a five-year low for outage time per member account: 37 minutes. In fact, it was the **fewest outage minutes per member in the history of East-Central Iowa REC!** There were no major weather events last year, which contributed to this success. More critically, our efforts to execute our Construction Work Plan and maintenance program continue to pay off for our members.

Our Operations team has been hard at work on our 2020 Construction Work Plan, and regular maintenance projects are also underway.


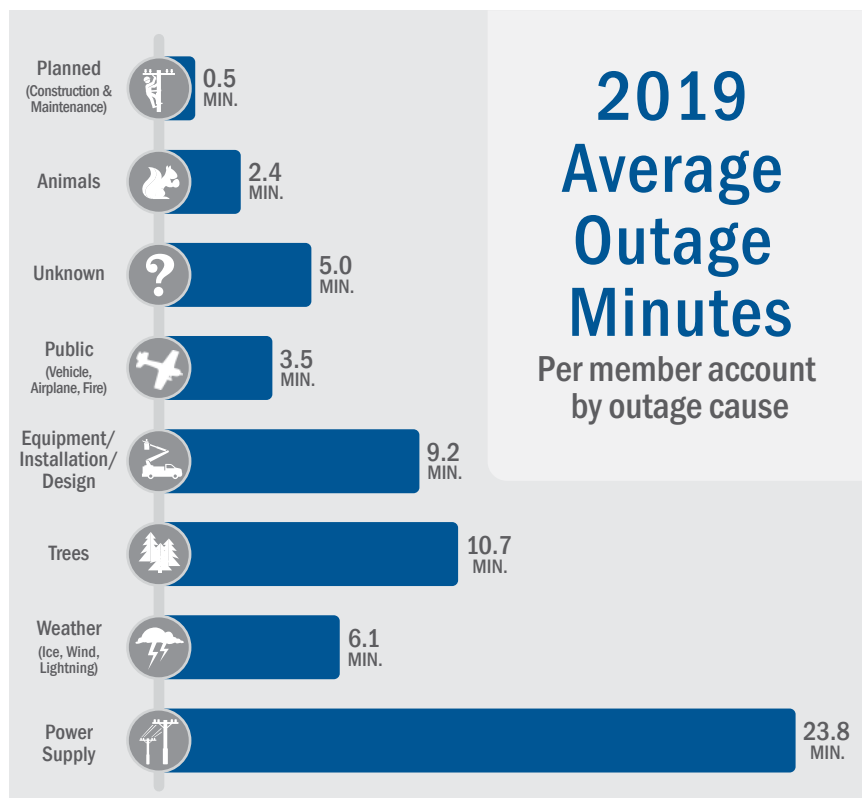
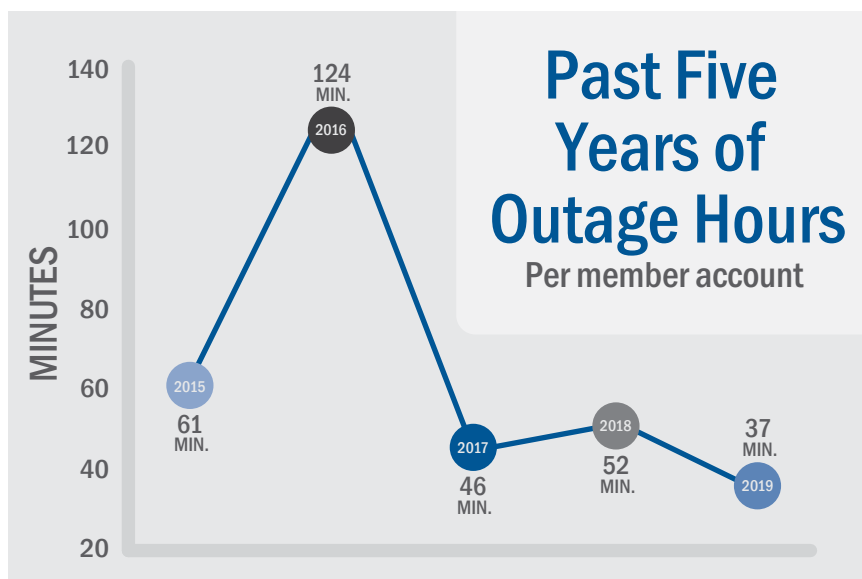
- » ECI REC is enhancing the reliability of its distribution system by replacing a batch of fuse cutouts with an identified manufacturing flaw with better-quality versions. In 2019, we replaced 1,091 units and will replace the remaining 300 in 2020.
- » The 2017–2020 Work Plan is near completion. Projects for 2020 include replacing 51 miles of distribution line—34.3 miles of overhead and 16.7 miles of underground line. In late January, ECI REC's overhead contractor—Highline Construction, Inc., of Paynesville, MN—began working on 1.3 miles of overhead line near the Homer substation. They will work on the remaining 33 miles of overhead line throughout the system during the next few months.
- » Vegetation control will be done on the Karr and Fairbank substation circuits. The contractor, Midwest Spray Team and Sales, will complete 100 miles on the distribution system in 2020. Maurer Tree Service, LLC, will be the contractor for 195 miles of tree trimming and vegetation maintenance on the Quasqueton and Lindahl substation circuits.
- » By the end of April, ECI REC Operation Centers will have received almost 75 miles of overhead conductor—that's 49 spools, or nearly 298,500 feet! We're also getting 35 reels (nearly 96,000 feet) of underground conductor.
- » To stay ahead of the growth and demand occurring on the south side of Independence, a new transformer was ordered over a year ago for the Sumner Substation. This larger 10 MVA transformer is scheduled for delivery and installation in March. 

photo by Brian Reidy, ECI REC



Lineworkers Colton Dietrick and Ben Donnelly, along with Line Foreman Brian Reidy worked to replace 36 poles in the Maryville substation area in Buchanan County. These poles were included in the list of 66 non-priority poles identified for eventual replacement by Osmose, ECI REC's contractor, during 2019's pole inspections. Crews have completed the 30 pole replacements in ECI REC's southern service territory.





Urbana Headquarters Undergoing Construction

a Keeping the Lights On feature

IN ADDITION TO the safety and security of member data, ECI REC prioritizes the safety and security of our employees and guests. Optimizing lobby security at the Urbana headquarters has been on our radar for some time, and in 2019 the Board of Directors approved a construction plan to better secure the Cooperative's front counter.

The approved construction plan substantially reduces the current lobby space, which is under-used. By repurposing this large area, two new spaces will be created: a smaller, more secure lobby/front counter area and


an all-employee training and meeting room.

Construction began January 20. The front lobby of the Urbana headquarters is now closed off and inaccessible through April 13. For your safety:

- » The first driveway is closed off to members and the public. It is being used only by the contractors working the job.
- » Members and the public are being redirected to the second drive to access the payment drop box and the back entrance if necessary.
- » There is a new payment drop

box located in the circle near the Cooperative's flagpole.

- » Member and public parking is available near the back entrance.
- » Signs are posted to assist members and the public in finding and using these areas.
- » Members can also make payments 24/7 toll-free at 888-223-2048, or online by registering with SmartHub at ecirec.smarthub.coop.

We regret any inconvenience, and thank you for your patience. For updates, visit ecirec.coop or find us on Facebook at facebook.com/eastcentraliowarec. 

Celebrate National Ag Month With Rebates From ECI REC!

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)

LIGHTING - All lamps & fixtures must be ENERGY STAR® or DesignLights Consortium qualified

EXISTING BUILDINGS

- » LED tubes - Replacing T12/T8: \$2/lamp
- » LED high bay/Troffer fixtures: Contact ECI REC
- » Indoor LED fixture replacements (non-troffer): 8-14W \$10/fixture; 15-49W \$15/fixture; 50-99W \$25/fixture; > 100W \$40/fixture

ALL BUILDINGS

- » Occupancy sensors: \$8 each
- » Outdoor security LED lighting: 20-34W \$10/fixture; 35-49W \$20/fixture; 50-74W \$40/fixture; 75-124W \$50/fixture; ≥ 125W \$60/fixture



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

Grain Bins: Farming Safely

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 our Cooperative provides assistance in planning a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins.

Grain bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures. Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas with existing bins, proximity to overhead power lines must be considered.

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. 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.)

The Cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations, please call your local electric cooperative.

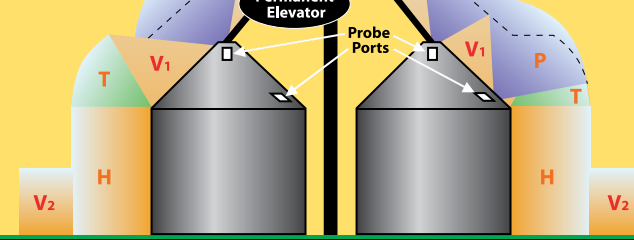


Get your safety sticker from ECI REC.

Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators

P = Probe clearance
5.5m (18 ft) required by Rule 234F1a
H = Horizontal clearance
4.6m (15 ft) required by Rule 234F1b
T = Transition clearance

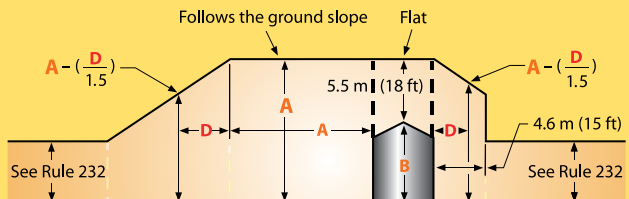
V₁ = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C
V₂ = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



From IEEE Std. C2-2017, "National Electrical Safety Code." © Copyright 2016 by IEEE. All rights reserved.

Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

ELEVATION



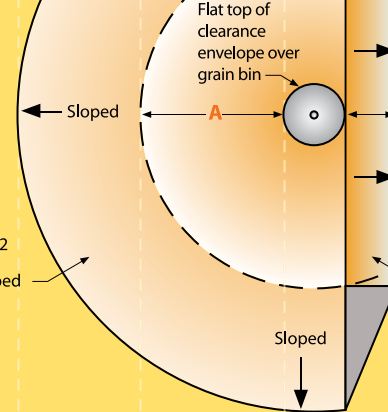
B = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
A = B + 5.5m (18 ft)
D = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

PLAN VIEW

LOADING SIDE

See Rule 232
Area of sloped clearance



NONLOADING SIDE

Sloped
4.6 m (15 ft)
Sloped
Rule 232 area
Area of sloped clearance

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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

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

Happy Arbor Day!
Friday,
April 24

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:

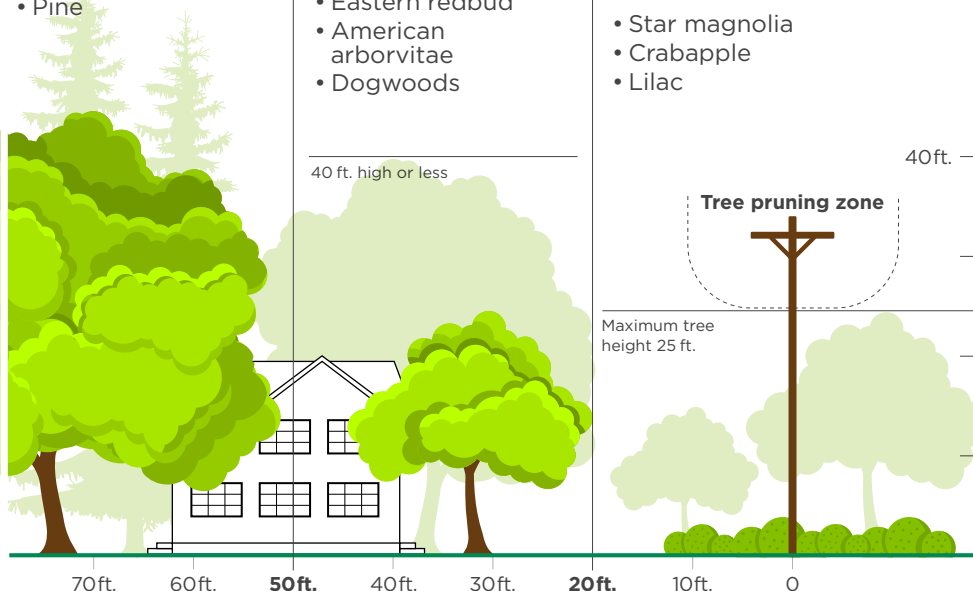
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenrain tree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

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.

Members Help Members by Contributing to RECare

a Community Connected article

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 pay for heating bills or the cost of winterizing the homes of ECI REC members who need assistance.

In 2019, 69 members donated \$6,962 to RECare. Some donated once a year, 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! We are proud 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. Hover over Your Electric Bill, look down the list for Member Programs, and click on RECare.



Scan to fill out form online.



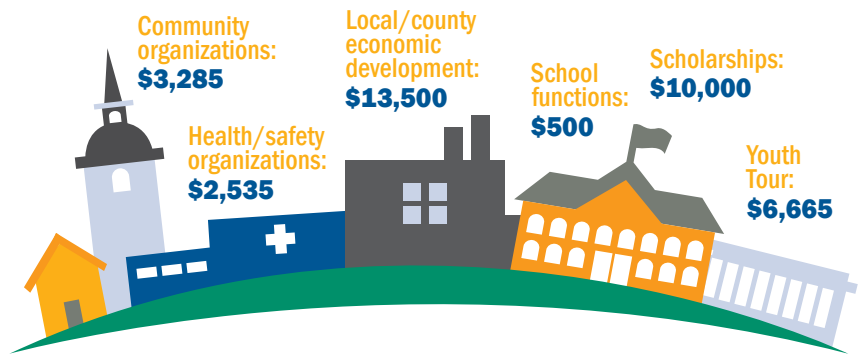
CARE with
RECare



Committed to our Community: ECI REC's 2019 Donations

a Community Connected update

COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY is one of East-Central Iowa REC's core values and one of the seven principles by which all cooperatives are expected to operate. In 2019, ECI REC gave \$36,485 to 36 community organizations, including 10 college scholarships. Some of the donations came from the Cooperative's general funds, but much of the money came from our Community Reinvestment Fund, where unclaimed patronage dividends are deposited. ☁



ECI REC's Position on Broadband Internet Service



a Keeping the Lights On question

Does East-Central Iowa REC plan to add fiber optics for broadband internet service that connects to member homes?

It's a great question that a few members have recently asked. CEO Steve Marlow and the ECI REC Board of Directors have had numerous discussions about fiber optics and high-speed internet service, and we'd like to take this opportunity to share our current position with our members:

- » We recognize there is a need for broadband in some areas of our service territory, but not all.
- » We believe the profitable areas already have broadband service, so we question the risk of the investment needed to provide this kind of service to our remaining members.
- » We question if it is ECI REC's responsibility to venture out of our core business at the level required to provide quality broadband service.
- » We have not ruled broadband out; however, we have taken the position of caution. We realize a neighboring cooperative provides this service, but each cooperative is different and has its own circumstances that inform its decisions.

At ECI REC, we are passionate about serving you with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in an environmentally responsible manner that adds quality to the lives of our members and the communities they live in. That is our core business, and we believe we perform it very well. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call 877-850-4343 or email memberservices@ecirec.coop. ☁

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) is April 20-24. This year's theme is "Safe Work Zones for All: Protect workers. Protect road users." During this annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season, please use extra caution driving in work zones.

**2 KIDS
IN COLLEGE
\$115,000
MORTGAGE
RESTORING
POWER TO
THE
COMMUNITY**

**BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S
YOU I'M WORRIED ABOUT.**

HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH.
When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.

**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**

smart corner

Take control of your ECI REC account.

Get registered on the SmartHub member portal:
ecirec.smarthub.coop/Login.html#registration.



Scan to access the member portal from your smartphone.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.



DIY Energy-Efficiency Project: Seal Air Leaks with Caulk

an Energy Wise idea



THE AVERAGE AMERICAN FAMILY spends \$2,000 annually on energy bills. Unfortunately, much of that money is wasted because of air leaks in the home. Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring, and plumbing can save energy and money.

There are many caulking compounds available, but the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible, and won't shrink or crack.

Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint with a putty knife, screwdriver, brush, or solvent. The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk. Apply in a continuous stream and make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of the crack or seam.

Afterward, use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk and wipe the surface with a dry cloth. Then, sit back and watch your energy bills shrink! 🌱

Six Benefits of Electric Water Heaters

an Energy Wise feature

ARE YOU IN THE MARKET FOR A NEW WATER HEATER?

HEATER? If you already have an electric unit, you know the benefits; but if you have a propane (gas) water heater, or are contemplating one, consider these points.

Safety: An electric water heater requires no venting, no gas line, and offers no CO₂ concerns.

Space: The water heater space allotment in your home often determines what will work best. An electric water heater installation requires zero clearance.

Maintenance: Electric water heaters are very low

maintenance; there are no moving parts and no pilot lights to be concerned with.

Price: An energy-efficient 50-gallon electric water heater will cost a family of four about \$40 per month to operate. Electric rates are considerably more stable than gas. For example, East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative's price per kilowatt-hour has increased 4.6% (less than a half a cent) over the past 10 years. Installation costs are also considerably less with an electric water heater.

Energy Efficiency: Consider an air-source heat pump unit—the ultimate

in electric water heating. With an efficiency rating of at least 2.4 (240%), they are the most efficient water heaters on the market today.

Incentives: Buy a new, energy-efficient electric water heater and receive a \$75 rebate. Receive a \$650 rebate for the purchase of an air-source heat pump water heater.

Still can't decide? Give us a call 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. 🌱



2020 Legislative Initiatives for Iowa's Electric Cooperatives

a Looking Out for You feature

IN THE COMING MONTHS, the Iowa General Assembly will address a multitude of issues, including energy-related items central to Iowa's rural economy.

Iowa's locally owned rural electric cooperatives work hard to provide affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans every day. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, our electric cooperative directors, managers, and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues.

2020 Legislative Agenda

Committed to Reliability

Iowa's electric cooperatives take seriously their responsibility to safely and reliably serve their members. The legislature should defend Iowa's service territory laws from being infringed upon, while prioritizing further investments by incumbent utilities to ensure Iowans continue to receive safe, reliable, and affordable power.

Policy bills: SOLAR Act (HF669/SF583) | Right of first refusal (ROFR) | Electric vehicle charging


Committed to Community

Iowa's electric cooperatives are proven pillars of the communities we serve and support. As such, we will continue to support rural economic development opportunities through the state's regulatory, tax, and grant programs that improve access to housing, employment, and broadband connectivity.

Policy bills: Empower Rural Iowa | Tax credit reform

Committed to Safety

Since the 1940s, Iowa's electric cooperatives have demonstrated our dedication to ensuring everyone goes home every night. Rural electric cooperatives will support legislation that helps us keep our members, our employees, and the general public safe from intentional or accidental contact with power lines.

Policy bills: Vegetation management (SSB1154) 



Advocating for safe, affordable, reliable electricity delivered in an environmentally responsible manner. Sign up for Rural Power updates from your electric cooperative at www.iaruralpower.org. Follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/iaruralpower.

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 2019, an average of 83 ECI REC members contributed an average of \$327.77 each to support the production of renewable energy in Iowa. Member support for the year totaled \$3,933.30.

- 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

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
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
(in subject area, note customer service)

Mail: Customer Service, Iowa Utilities Board, 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

Don't Miss Out on Electric Vehicle Rebates!

ECI REC Residential Rebate

- » Electric Level II Charger (240/208-volt input supply) – 50% of installed cost up to \$500

ECI REC Commercial Rebates

- » Electric Level II Charger (240/208-volt input supply) – \$1,000 per charger (up to five)
- » Electric Vehicle – \$250 per new vehicle (up to five)

Rebate qualifications vary. Review the appropriate rebate form for the applicable requirements prior to purchase. Forms can be found on our website, www.ecirec.coop.

Federal Tax Credit

- » Ranges between \$2,500 and \$7,500, depending on the capacity of the battery.
- » Learn more at irs.gov.

Energy Use Survey Being Conducted

Please be aware that ECI REC—in conjunction with our power supplier, CIPCO—is conducting a survey of a random sample of our residential members this spring. This survey asks about your home, your appliances, energy efficiency measures, and your opinions about energy use and related topics.

Only a small portion of our residential members will receive a copy of the survey in the mail. If you receive a survey, we ask that you take 10 minutes to complete it and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided. You can also complete it online at the web address found on the questionnaire. We appreciate your help! 🙏

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 are 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 319-443-4343 or email ecirec@ecirec.coop. 🙏

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO from page 12


enues of \$21,855,705. This amount is lower than 2019 due to anticipated reduced kilowatt-hour sales in comparison to last year. A return of approximately \$500,000 to members in patronage is also part of the 2020 budget and is derived from being a member-owner.

Providing reliable, safe, affordable electricity in an environmentally responsible manner is our top priority. A breakdown of the 2020 budget is provided below, allowing you to see where your dollars will be invested. The budget includes approximately \$5,500,000 in system improvements. Some of the improvements include but are not limited to:

- » New services construction – \$113,011
- » 51 miles of line replacement – \$2,341,800
- » Substation upgrades – \$1,597,750
- » New transformers, meters, and special equipment – \$330,010
- » Member services upgrades – \$117,473
- » Sectionalizing equipment (such as breakers and fuses) – \$186,541
- » Pole replacement – \$175,000
- » Technology – \$30,000

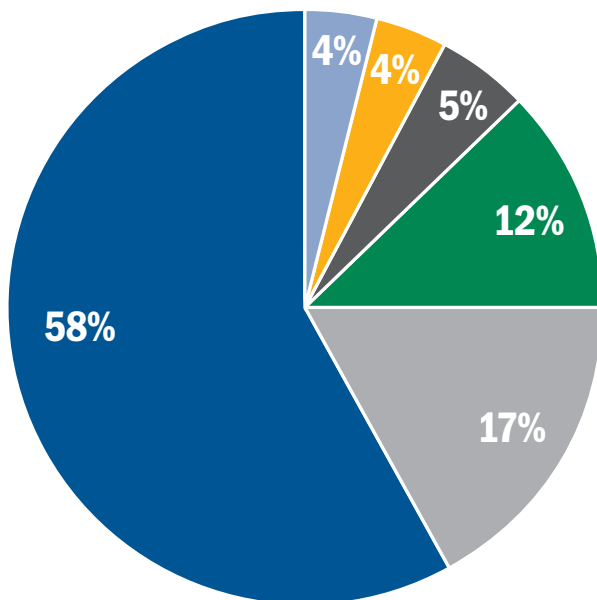
These system upgrades are part of ECI REC's 2017–2020 Construction Work Plan, which makes it possible to accommodate new growth while improving the reliability of your electric service at an affordable cost to our membership.

The budget includes \$350,000 in preventative and ongoing line maintenance programs, including pole and URD testing, meter testing, tree trimming, transformer and breaker maintenance, and additional items that assist in keeping your lights on.

The graph below provides a brief summary of where member dollars were spent in 2019, now that the year has concluded. 

How Your REC Dollars Were Spent in 2019

- Cost of power
- Depreciation, taxes, administrative and general expense
- Operations and maintenance
- Interest
- Operating margins
- Consumer accounts, service, and information



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

FOR SALE: Adult camping/hiking equipment. Various small items and two significant items. Sierra Designs tent (1 adult or 2 kids) with stuff sack. Camp Trails external frame backpack, 38"x23"x11", top-load, large front pocket, four side pockets, padded hip belt, four pounds with rain cover. Both in exceptionally good shape. PH: 319-448-4414 or email zeisf@uiu.edu for pictures.

FOR SALE: Cabin near Independence, along the Wapsipinicon River and on leased ground. Call for more information. PH: 319-327-2210.

Please email your ad to classifieds@ecirec.coop. Ads for the May/June Heartland Link must be received by April 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.

WE PAY YOU TO PULL THE PLUG

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 3 appliances per year, per address.



PULL THE PLUG



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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

Board Approves 2020 Budget

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS is happy to report that a general rate increase will not be required for the eighth straight year! This news follows approval of the 2020 budget and financial forecast.

Kilowatt-hour sales for 2019 were 3.4% more than budgeted and 0.75% greater than sales in 2018. Margins for 2019 were \$2,003,190. This was \$359,503 over the budgeted amount of \$1,643,687. Margins from electric sales were \$822,046. The remaining \$1,181,144 was derived from non-operating sources, such as patronage from Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), our generation and transmission cooperative, and other non-profit cooperatives. After assigning some margins to Contingency and Statutory Reserves, the Directors will allocate the remaining margins to the 2019 members who consumed electricity from ECI REC.

The management team proposed to the Board of Directors a 2020 budget that both balances and prioritizes service reliability and rate stability. We will utilize technology and a skilled workforce to accomplish these goals. The 2020 budget includes estimated rev-