Why we need you to participate in our load management program

These days, we’re all working hard to use energy wisely and save money. That’s why we are asking you, our member-owners, to help your co-op by participating in our Watts Smart load management program.

Because of our upgrade to automated metering infrastructure (AMI), load management is a service we can now offer to all members in our distribution system. By participating, you will be helping Butler County REC better manage costs, use energy wisely, reduce the need to build new power plants, and help the environment – all of which can help lessen the impact of future rate increases.

Participating is easy. Butler County REC installs a switch that remotely controls your electric water heater during times when demand for electricity is at its peak. These peak periods are also the times when wholesale electricity costs the most. Reducing peak demand is wise energy use that helps reduce costs – for you and for Butler County REC.

The energy management switch operates for only a few hours on a limited number of the hottest and coldest days of the year. Since water heaters act as storage devices, there should be no loss of hot water. At electric cooperatives around the country, these energy management programs have proven to be successful and effective.

Our technicians will install and maintain the control switch at no cost to you. If you are ever dissatisfied or inconvenienced, we will remove the switch.

To sign up for the Watts Smart program, call Mike Boomgarden, energy advisor, at 319-267-2726 or 888-267-2726, or e-mail him at msboom@butlerrec.coop. We look forward to working with you to help control energy costs for all of us.

Reducing peak demand is wise energy use that helps reduce costs – for you and for Butler County REC.

A load management switch will cycle your electric water heater off and on to control electric demand and operate the entire system more efficiently.

Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

A WEEK-LONG Trip to Washington, D.C.

Butler County REC is seeking student applicants to participate in the 2016 Youth Tour June 10-16. High school juniors whose parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn are invited to apply. Contact Butler County REC or go to www.butlerrec.coop for more information. Deadline to apply is March 14, 2016.
Start a tradition of safety this season

The holiday season is full of traditions. This year, Safe Electricity encourages you to incorporate another activity into your holiday traditions—safe holiday decorating.

Holiday decorations are one of the most festive yet also one of the most dangerous parts of the season. We urge everyone to follow these precautions:

- **When decorating outside, look up and look out.** Never throw holiday lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- **Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house.** Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- **Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations rated for outdoor use.** Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to use them. Use plastic or insulated hooks to hang lights.
- **Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs).** Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets are not equipped with them. GFCI protection is very important outdoors, where weather conditions can create dangerous electrical situations.
- **Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords, and do not attach cords to utility poles.**
- **Outdoor holiday lights are for seasonal use, up to 90 days.**
- **Avoid decorating outside on windy or wet days.** For more information, visit safeelectricity.org.

![Image of Christmas tree and candles]

**Wishing you a safe, happy holiday season!**

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**HOLIDAY LIGHTING COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF LAMP</th>
<th>WATTAGE PER LAMP</th>
<th>WATTAGE PER 20 LAMPS</th>
<th>SEASONAL OPERATING COST*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO INCANDESCENT</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>$13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINI INCANDESCENT</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>$0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Using 40 days of operation, 8 hours per day, 5.771 per kWh (DOE average).

In addition, the LED will last as much as 40 times longer than the incandescent lamps.

Source: energ.gov

**Light-emitting diode (LED) lights have a number of benefits over conventional holiday lighting.**

1. Energy efficient – use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs
2. Long lifespan – up to 50,000 hours or more used outdoors and twice as long indoors
3. Safe – no chance of combustion since the bulbs are cool to the touch, regardless of how long they are left on

**REBATE REMINDER**

Receive $2 back for LED-holiday lights purchased in 2015. Maximum rebate is $10 per member per year.

Rebate forms are on our website, or contact us for the details.

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**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**

If you or a member of your family plans to attend a college or technical school next year, ask us about a scholarship. Scholarships include a $1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and $500 scholarships for power line training and wind energy and turbine technology programs.

Contact us for details on how to apply.
Co-ops plan for the rise of natural gas as a fuel for electricity

One of the major changes in the U.S. electric utility industry is that coal, once the dominant fuel source for generating electricity, is increasingly being replaced by natural gas. “We’re not going to completely turn away from one fuel and focus on another,” says Mike Casper, senior manager, Generation and Fuels for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). “We need a diverse portfolio of fuels to maintain reliable and affordable electricity.”

The attention to this issue by electric co-op leaders results from a recent trend in which coal is being replaced by natural gas. By May of 2015, coal’s share had fallen to 33 percent of U.S. electricity output. Natural gas, meanwhile, has nearly doubled to 31 percent.

That changing generation trend results primarily from the steep drop in natural gas prices. Environmental regulations also increasingly favor natural gas because of that fuel’s lower carbon emissions rates.

However, coal-fired power plants have long provided reliable, low-cost electricity. Natural gas prices have traditionally been very volatile. Also, increased use of natural gas could require significant expansion of the natural gas pipeline system.

NRECA policy resolutions call for diversity for generating electricity, supporting “the use of domestic coal, oil and gas resources, nuclear energy, renewables, as well as conservation, energy efficiency, and demand management.”

Keep your information safe online

Be skeptical
- Only provide your personal information to trusted sources on secure sites.
- If you receive an email purporting to be from a known entity asking you to click through to log into your account, instead go directly to the site by typing the URL into the address bar.
- Use a credit card with consumer protections to shop online instead of your debit card.

Don’t overshare
- If you want to share your birthday online, consider not sharing the year.
- Consider not using your full legal name on public social media accounts.

Arm yourself
- Secure your devices with strong passcodes. Change your passwords every six months.
- Only use secure public wireless networks.
- Make sure your operating system and browsers run with the latest updates and security patches.
- Use security software on your computers and run regular scans.
- To keep digital documents safe, you can encrypt your devices.

Reduce, reuse, recycle, and redact!
- Before discarding your old electronics, delete all data. Instructions exist to walk you through the process.
Nominating Committee seeks candidates for board of directors

The Butler County REC board of directors has appointed the following members to serve on its Nominating Committee:

- Terry Bailey, Nashua, phone 641-435-2344
- Danny Buls, Sumner, phone 319-882-4218
- Chad Osterbuhr, Allison, phone 319-267-2310

The Nominating Committee will meet at the cooperative office in Allison on January 7, 2016, to select members to run for three director positions that will expire at our next annual meeting scheduled for April 2, 2016. The election of directors will take place at this annual meeting.

At this time, the directors whose terms will expire are the only names on the ballots. These directors are:

- Gary Poppe, Ionia
- Steve Boevers, Readlyn
- Allyn Harms, Clarksville

Gary Poppe represents Chickasaw County; Steve Boevers, the east half of Bremer County; and Allyn Harms, the southeast quarter of Butler County.

If you have suggestions for a director from any of these areas, please contact any or all members of the Nominating Committee on or before January 7, 2016.

Nomination Process

The list of nominations will then be posted at the Butler County REC office in Allison. For 10 days after posting this list, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of vacancy may be made by written petition. Forms will be provided at the request of any member and must be signed by no less than 20 members of the cooperative. Any member so nominated must give prior consent to such nomination. The following excerpt from the Butler County REC articles of incorporation and bylaws further explains this process:

Not less than sixty (60) days prior to the regular annual meeting of members, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of not less than three members of the Association who are not directors of the Association. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of nominees, residing in the general area of the vacancy, with at least one member nominated for each vacancy to be filled at the next annual meeting. The written list of nominations of the Nominating Committee shall be posted at the office of the Association not less than thirty days prior to mailing the notice of the annual meeting of members. For ten days after posting of the list of nominations by the committee, additional nominations of members residing in the general area of the vacancy may be made by written petition on forms provided on request of any member, and signed by not less than 20 members of the Association. Any member nominated shall give prior consent to such nomination whether by committee or petition. The notice of the annual meeting of members shall list the names of all nominees for the office of director.

In the event any member who is nominated either by the committee or petition withdraws consent, dies, or for any other reason is unable or declines to serve as a director, prior to the annual meeting but after the deadlines set forth above for posting and mailing of notices, and as a result thereof there remains only one nominee from the general area of any vacancy, then the committee on nominations shall be vested with full authority to nominate an additional member of the Association residing in the general area of the vacancy, so that two nominees from that area exist. If sufficient time exists prior to the annual meeting, the members of the Association shall be notified by mail of the new nomination. If sufficient time does not exist, prior to the election of directors at the annual meeting, a general announcement shall be made concerning the withdrawal, death, etc. of the person originally nominated, and the person subsequently nominated by the Nominating Committee.

For board of directors

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Harms earns certification

Allyn Harms, board director, Butler County REC, recently earned his Credential Cooperative Director (CCD) status from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). To achieve the award he successfully completed five courses that provide the essential knowledge and skills required of cooperative directors.

Harms has been a director since 2013. He and his wife Bev live on a farm in southeastern Butler County.

Welcome to SmartHub!

Members who use our online bill pay service in December will find we’ve upgraded to a service called SmartHub. The new login page will look like the image below.

You can login to SmartHub using the same e-mail and password you have always used. New users will need their account number and a valid e-mail address to sign up for SmartHub.

If you need assistance, please contact our office at Allison.