

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Duane Rieckenberg,
president, board of directors



Craig Codner, CEO

Annual message to members

From Duane Rieckenberg, board president, and Craig Codner, CEO

Learning to drive. Graduating. Finally finishing that big project. All accomplishments. All worth celebrating.

In 2017, Butler County REC had a number of accomplishments worth celebrating including our solar demonstration project coming on line; patronage dividends of \$214,772 distributed to our membership; employees volunteering 1,128 hours to various schools, churches and community organizations; and a total of almost 200 load control receivers installed since program inception to help reduce demand during peak energy use.

We are proud of our “see something, say something” safety culture. Our employees live that culture, as evidenced by no lost-time accidents again in 2017. This brings our total to nearly 900,000 hours—well on our way to reaching a goal of 1 million hours and beyond.

There are cyber security issues in the news almost every day. Keeping your information safe is important to us, so we implemented our Pay-by-Phone system at the end of the year as a move toward Payment Card Industry compliance. The standards include not housing payment information or taking that information over the phone. We appreciate your understanding during this transition and use of the new system.

Our directors make a difference. They represent your best interests when making important decisions. This position holds a lot of responsibility and part of that commitment is to continue educating themselves on how to be a great board member. Seven of our nine directors have accomplished earning their Director Gold Credential, the highest board member certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and two more are working toward that designation.

One accomplishment we are always proud of is balancing cooperative stability and doing what’s right for you. In 2018, we are looking at a cost-of-service study with a possible rate adjustment in 2019 to maintain the safe and reliable service our members expect and deserve. We want to ensure that what you pay to turn on your lights and heat your home accurately recovers the costs associated with delivering electricity.

Teamwork is essential in every organization, and at Butler County REC it is important among not only our employees but between us and other cooperatives, as well. Over the years we have formed partnerships, living the cooperative principle of Cooperation Among Cooperatives. As we look to identifying more efficiencies, we may find ourselves expanding the sharing of employees, resources and services within those partnerships.

Long-term employees and directors are a source of pride for Butler County REC. In 2017, eight reached over 30 years of service. In addition, four reached 20 years, two have been with us for 15 years and one employed at the co-op for five years. That is about one-third of our team with a combined total of over 350 years of service.

Two of our long-time board members are stepping down. Don Feldman, Greene, and John Klahsen, Aplington, with 64 combined years of service, have chosen to turn over the reins. We are grateful for their time and thank them for their willingness to serve, their insight and their dedication to members. They both will be missed.

We are proud of our many accomplishments in 2017. But our greatest accomplishment is serving our members. And we will continue to work with you to improve your quality of life through our services and programs. As always, contact us with any questions or concerns.



Thank you to members contributing to RECare

Imagine wondering how you were going to pay your electric bills during the winter. This is the reality for some of our members. But this winter, almost 70 of you extended a helping hand by contributing to RECare, our program of members helping members. And we thank you for your generosity.

Through RECare we provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay heating bills and to assist in the weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

Grain bin requirements

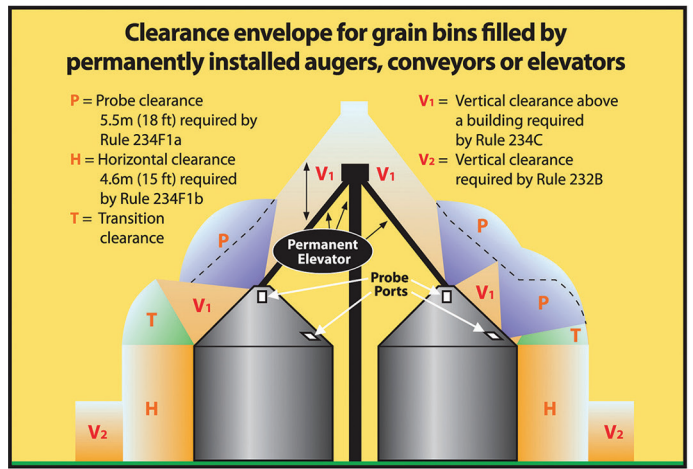
When you start to plan for a new grain bin, please contact your electric cooperative. We will provide assistance in planning for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins. The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators.

Butler County REC.....	319-267-2726
Corn Belt Power.....	515-332-2571
Franklin REC.....	641-456-2557
Grundy County REC.....	319-824-5251
Prairie Energy Cooperative.....	515-532-2805

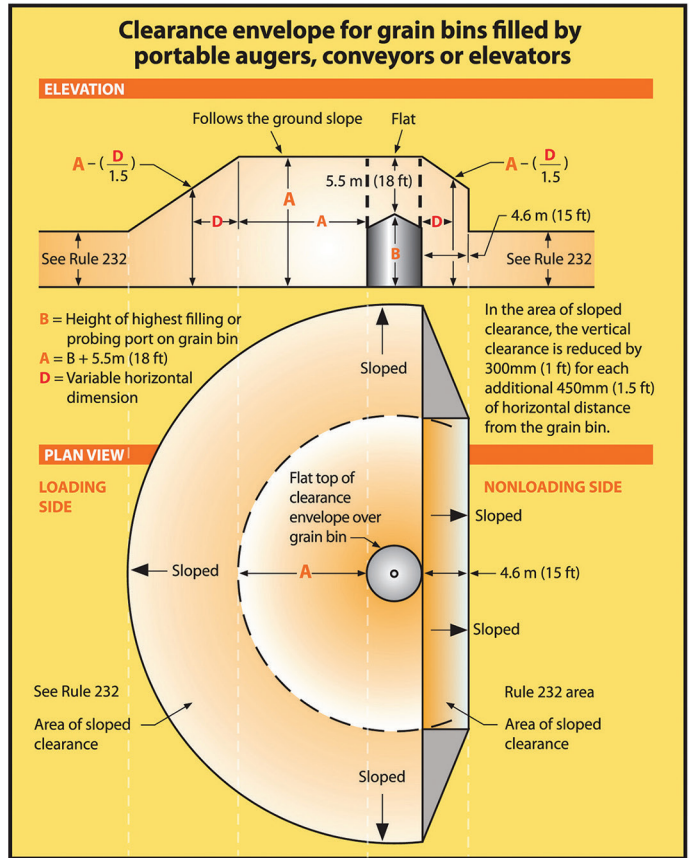
The drawings at the right show the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact your cooperative listed here.

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 which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234E. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997.* (The Iowa Utilities Board has adopted this language.)

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or for damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



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RECare MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Your rural electric co-op has always extended a helping hand to those needing it. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of members helping members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers. You may make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your monthly electric bill. Even a dollar a month pledge will help others.



RECare Authorization Form

- I will contribute \$_____ per month. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will make a one-time contribution of \$_____ to RECare. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Account Number _____

Return to your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Annual contractor conference promotes energy efficiency

Iowa's electric cooperatives celebrated the 26th annual "Momentum Is Building" conference Feb. 8-9 at the Sheraton West Des Moines hotel.

Since the conference began, its mission has been to provide a forum for energy efficiency and electric technology education. The conference seeks to build relationships with trade professionals who influence electric co-op members' decision-making about home building/remodeling, heating, cooling, water heating and energy efficiency.

Momentum Is Building continues to offer up-to-date building science information, practical hands-on details and new technology displays for building trades professionals. Rural electric cooperative personnel from across Iowa join their local contractors at the conference.

For many years, Momentum Is Building has allowed building trades professionals to find out what's new in the industry—techniques as well as products. Attendees also obtain continuing education credits they need to stay current in their professions.

Nationally recognized speakers shared their knowledge on topics including meeting consumer expectations with high-performance homes and heating and cooling systems, air quality and ventilation; building homes to Touchstone Energy standards®; and CEU sessions for electricians and heating-plumbing professionals. Momentum Is Building also includes a trade show where participants visit with companies to learn about new products.

Support for the conference comes from Iowa's rural electric cooperatives.



Mike Geerdes (left), member service manager, Grundy County REC, and Keaton Hildreth (center), member services, Calhoun County REC, speak with a lighting vendor at the 2018 Momentum Is Building conference.

Geothermal federal tax credit reinstated

Orphaned by Congress in 2016, the 30 percent geothermal tax credit has been reinstated retroactive to Jan. 1, 2017. This means if you bought a geothermal heating, cooling and hot water system after Jan. 1, 2017, you qualify for the credit.

To receive the tax credit, the equipment must meet EnergyStar requirements at the time of installation and be installed in the United States in a home owned by the taxpayer. Be sure to speak with your tax consultant to make sure you are meeting all of the requirements.

The tax credit will be at 30 percent until December 31, 2019. In 2020, it will begin to phase out, dropping to 26 percent and to 22 percent in 2021, ending December 31, 2021.

Although the tax credit will expire, the benefits of installing a geothermal system will not. With geothermal you can expect lower utility bills—typically 30-70 percent annual savings compared to ordinary systems, long life span—usually 20 years if maintained, and improved comfort – even heating and cooling with no hot or cold blasts of air.

Contact your Touchstone Energy cooperative to discuss whether geothermal is the right choice for you.



Remember to #ThankALineworker



Directors elected to serve you

Members of your electric cooperative re-elected one incumbent director and two new directors at the annual meeting on Saturday, March 17. Re-elected was Duane Rieckenberg, Ionia, and newly elected were Share Brandt, Allison, and Troy Feldman, Greene.

A crowd of approximately 450 people with 190 voting members attended the meeting held in the North Butler Elementary School in Allison.

Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager of Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Humboldt, was the guest speaker. He said, "We have found that what helps one co-op grow helps all co-ops in the system." He went on to say that expanding load spreads the fixed costs and provides benefits to everyone, even if the growth isn't in a cooperative's territory.

At the close of the business meeting, \$700 in cash was given away. Grand prize winner of \$100 was Leonard Becker of Charles City. Dave Ibeling of Ackley won a TV, Janice Tonne of Tripoli won an LED security light and Marvel Busch of Ackley won an instant pot. Co-op members Lowell Benning and Dave Nicholson, both of Clarksville, won Kill-O-Watt meters.

The board of directors elected the following officers to serve the cooperative this year: Duane Rieckenberg, Ionia, president; Gary Poppe, Ionia, vice president; Leland Boyd, Charles City, treasurer; Tim Schrage, Allison, secretary; and Gerald Schmitt, Rockford, assistant secretary-treasurer.



From left: Share Brandt, Allison; Duane Rieckenberg, Ionia; and Troy Feldman, Greene



Prize winners from left: Dave Nicholson, Lowell Benning, Marvel Busch, Janice Tonne and Dave Ibeling.

Years of service recognized

Congratulations to the following Butler County REC directors and employees recognized for their years of service: Front row (l to r)—Steve Boevers, 5 years; Don Feldman, 36 years; Kent Gulick, 35 years; Sandi Miller, 30 years; Abe Stirling, 25 years. Back row (l to r)—John Klahsen, 28 years; Allyn Harms, 5 years; Jon Oltmann, 40 years; Alan Mayer, 5 years; John Endelman, 20 years; Tracy Yost, 25 years; Clint Deutsch, 5 years. Not pictured: Gary Poppe, 35 years; Jeff Sherburne, 20 years; Matt Mahoney, 15 years; Seth Bram, 10 years



Natalie Risse

Risse wins scholarship

Butler County REC has selected Natalie Risse, a Wartburg College student, as the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, ND.

Natalie's parents are Tom and Jodi Risse of Sumner. Natalie is exploring business administration at Wartburg and is minoring in Spanish.

Each year dependents of members of Butler County REC are eligible to apply for the scholarship from Basin Electric. The scholarship is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of a student living on electric cooperative lines.



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