

Outage response changes, but goal does not

At Butler County REC, our goal during an outage is the same as our members' goal—power restoration. This goal became easier and quicker to reach when our Operations Department began using STAR Energy's PYXIS Outage Management System (OMS).

With PYXIS, when a member calls in with an outage, our line crew members are able to see that outage on the iPads in their trucks. The iPads are equipped with our mapping system, also a product of STAR Energy. The two products—OMS and mapping—work together.

The PYXIS system is a prediction model, so if two or more outage calls come in, PYXIS can predict if the entire line is out. This helps reduce mileage because the crews know where to begin looking for the cause of the outage. On their iPads, the crews are able to track the outage to the affected substation.

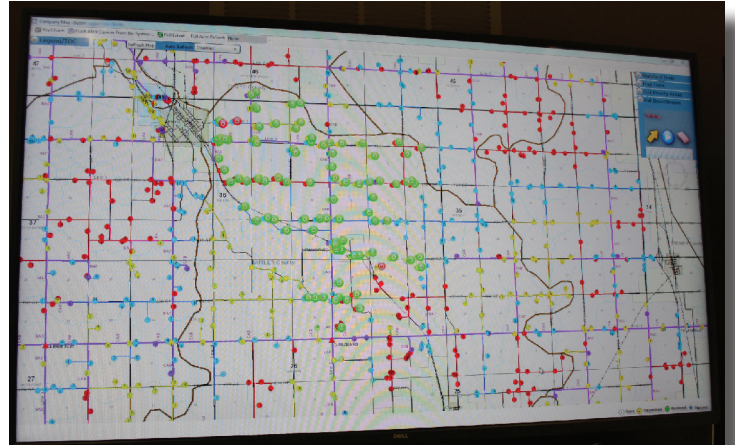
If the outage is minor and after-hours, John Endelman, operations manager, does not have to be called. Because the crews are able to see the outage on their iPads, they are called. "The system improves communication between the crews and SRS (Security and Response Services, our after-hours call service)," said Endelman.

In addition, the system eliminates the need for paper maps and the number of people called in to assist in the office. Endelman is now able to dispatch by himself. This frees up someone to help the crews, restoring power more quickly.

During one recent storm outage when Corn Belt Power Cooperative, our power supplier, lost power at two substations, he worked alone in the office for most of the outage. SRS took around 200 outage calls during the storm.

OMS and the mapping system also work in conjunction with our meters. This allows us to "ping" meters to make sure our members' power has been restored. Endelman also calls members as a double-check.

On the mapping system, the crews on their iPads and Endelman in the office are able to hover the cursor over a property and the system provides information on how large the trans-



This map shows the Operations Department if each member on a line has power or if there are still issues.

former is (so they know what size to load onto the truck), the owner's name and phone number and other information. This eliminates phone calls to the office to obtain the information.

PYXIS OMS is also a reporting program. The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) requires utilities to report their number of outages, the length of time of the outages and so on at the end of the year. PYXIS continually updates the information, allowing it to be viewed at any time and generates the reports. This saves a lot of time, as prior to the system being implemented the information had to be manually input.

In addition, the outages are listed by codes—for example, tree issues. This allows the department to check the number of outages for each code to determine if issues are concentrated in one area and take care of those accordingly, possibly eliminating the need for a member to call in.

Although the system has changed the way outages are handled at Butler County REC, what hasn't changed is that members still need to call in when their power has gone out. No matter the time of day or night, our phones are answered.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Call Iowa One Call at least 48 hours before digging. It's a fast, free call that will help keep you, your family, and your farm safe.



Co-op representatives attend REC Day on the Hill

The sun was shining brightly as more than 200 rural electric cooperative (REC) employees and directors (pictured above), representing 38 co-ops, traveled to the Iowa State Capitol on Wednesday, March 14, to advocate on behalf of their members during the annual REC Day on the Hill. With the proposed energy omnibus bill working its way through the House, co-ops met with legislators to discuss regulatory parity and clarity, in addition to maintaining fair and affordable rates. Iowa's electric co-ops support cost-effective efficiency programs and a utility's ability to recover fixed costs associated with providing safe, reliable service, ensuring that all co-op members pay equitably to use and maintain the electric grid.

The electric co-op representatives first gathered for a briefing on state legislative issues, then met with their local elected officials during a dessert social on the first-floor rotunda of the Capitol. Legislators and visitors were able to view dozens of booths around the rotunda, sharing various ways Iowa's electric co-ops serve their members.

Your cooperative reminds you to plug into safety

In May, electric cooperatives across the country promote safety awareness to coincide with National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and as your not-for-profit electric utility, we are committed to educating the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur when electrical equipment is outdated or improperly used.

It is critical that you understand your home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into your home. You need to ensure you have an electrical system that's compatible with the increased load.

Together, let's plug into safety this May and every month.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

This month, we encourage all members to take extra time to plug into safety.

#ElectricalSafetyMonth

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Effective May 22, 1991, the Iowa Utilities Board passed a ruling requiring all non-rate regulated utilities to post the following notice to its memberships: If a member-consumer has a question or concern regarding his/her electric service, please write or call your local electric cooperative at the following address or phone number:

Butler County REC

521 N. Main Street, PO Box 98
Allison, IA 50602-0098
(319) 267-2726
www.butlerrec.coop

Franklin REC

1560 Highway 65, PO Box 437
Hampton, IA 50441-0437
(641) 456-2557
www.franklinrec.coop

Grundy County REC

303 N. Park Ave., PO Box 39
Grundy Center, IA 50638-0039
(319) 824-5251
www.grundycountyreca.com

Prairie Energy Cooperative

2099 Highway 3 West, PO Box 353
Clarion, IA 50525-0353
(515) 532-2805
www.prairieenergy.coop

If your complaint is related to your cooperative's service rather than its rates, and your cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 1-877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by email to customer@iub.iowa.gov.

Learn how to beat the peak

As warmer weather sets in, keeping the house comfortable switches from heating to cooling. Improving energy efficiency at home can help you and your Touchstone Energy cooperative reduce demand, saving energy and money.

Housework hiatus

Avoiding peak energy costs is a good reason to put some chores on hold until power demand dips. Consider some of the jobs one kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity can do before you use that kWh, and do these activities outside of peak hours:

- Wash three loads of laundry
- Complete one dryer cycle
- Vacuum rugs in two average homes
- Run three cycles in a loaded dishwasher

Love 78

Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system or heat pump can play a huge part in controlling your energy use year-round.

At 78 degrees, you are probably comfortable outside, so why not indoors? Most people won't notice much of a difference in air temperature whether the thermostat is set at 73 or raised to 78. But the closer your air conditioner or heat pump setting is to the outdoor temperature, the less your unit will run.

Share the space

Today it's common for everyone to retreat to separate spaces. Bring back family time to beat the peak.

LCD televisions generally use 60 percent as much electricity as comparably sized plasma models. One laptop computer uses about 20 percent as much power as a desktop computer and monitor. A video game console consumes about 200 watts of power. One system for competition between family members in one room uses about a third of the power of three players engaged in online games around the house.

Finish the space with energy-efficient LED fixtures for lighting, a couple sets of headphones and a few rechargeable power boosters for the family's handheld devices. You'll have a cool and fun place to spend a few hours with the family.

Change Habits to BEAT THE PEAK

You can beat the peak (and save money!) by decreasing your power use when energy demand and prices are at their highest. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

Laundry for Less:

Full loads mean fewer cycles, and washers and dryers run in the late evenings add less heat and humidity to the home. Energy can cost less outside of peak hours.



Cool Off/Calm Down:

Turn off unnecessary lighting and electronics that generate heat, resist the urge to turn down the thermostat and remember, lower fan settings use less energy.



Intramural Competition:

Online gaming with each active player using their own computer, display, gaming console and internet connection gets pricey. Play each other at home on one screen and save.



Countertop Convenience:

Range or oven cooking can really warm up a kitchen. Microwaves, convection ovens, induction cooktops, Crock-Pot® and toaster ovens put more cooking heat where you need it.



Stay Back!

Know the difference between types of lines and wires. If you see a downed electric line, be aware that it could be live and dangerous!

Electric Wire

Electric wires are larger and can be easily identified by the three separate twisted wires, one being uniquely silver or uninsulated.

Cable Wire

Cable lines are round and look similar to the coaxial cable that connects to the TV in your home.

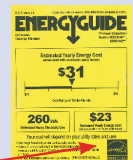
Phone Wire

Telephone wires are typically smaller, flat wires.

Energy Star appliance rebates

Check out our rebates for new, ENERGY STAR rated appliances installed at members' locations:

- Clothes Dryers – \$50
- Clothes Washers – \$50
- Dishwashers – \$25
- Freezers – \$25
- Refrigerators – \$25



Be sure to check the Energy Guide for the Energy Star label on the bottom right of the guide.

Winner's LED light installed



Janice Tonne (l) receives her LED security light from Matt Mahoney, energy services manager at Butler County REC. Tonne won the light in a drawing at Butler County REC's annual meeting.



Andy Uthoff, crew chief, installs Janice Tonne's LED security light.

Pole testing to continue

The former Ameripole, now Mi-Tech Services, Inc. from Madison, Wisconsin, will be in the Lacy, Lawler and Peterson substations this spring and summer to continue pole inspections begun last fall. These substations include the southwest corner of Floyd County and the northeast area of our service territory. Substations on both sides of Butler County REC's system are checked every summer.

John Endelman, Butler County REC operations manager, provides the Mi-Tech crew with a map of the area. The crews then check all poles older than 15 years in these substation areas. If the pole does not have underground attached to it, they dig around the pole, treat it and wrap it. If the pole has underground attached to it, the crews sound and bore the pole. This includes drilling a hole into the pole and testing the wood fibers.



A pole being drilled into so the wood fibers can be tested.

They provide an inspection list on every pole tested and give notice of a "danger" pole. Danger poles are replaced immediately. On average 40-50 poles are rejected every year. Our line crews work on replacing those poles over the summer.

Changes coming to Butler County REC office



The Butler County REC office is receiving a makeover—inside and outside. Inside, safety measures will be implemented to protect our employees by enclosing the office area with secured doors and a walk-up window for bill payment. Outside, the sidewalk and curb will be repaired in front of the building. Our entrance during outside construction will be moved to the back of the building. Please watch for signs. Our drop box on the southeast corner of the building will still be accessible. Construction is expected to be complete by early summer, weather permitting. Thank you for your patience as we make our area safer for everyone.

INtouch is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative
521 North Main • PO Box 98 • Allison, IA 50602
PHONES: 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726 • FAX: 319.267.2566
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