

A WORD FROM



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Rate structuring, for any business, is a complicated process. At Butler County REC, our goal is two-fold. We want to ensure that each rate class is treated fairly through our rate structure—that one rate class is not supporting another rate class—and that our revenue is covering our costs.

For insight, we invest in a cost-of-service study in which our current rate structure is examined to ensure it is helping us reach our goals. If it is not, we have to look at alternatives, including a possible rate adjustment.

This year, we had a cost-of-service

Cost-of-service study being analyzed

study completed. As we analyze the results and look at our single-phase farm and residential rate class, we look at the average user. This rate class includes most homes on our system. If you look at your monthly bill, your property's rate class is listed above your usage. At Butler County REC, the average usage for a single-phase farm and residential consumer is around 1,300 kWh a month. Rate adjustments are based on that average.

As we make decisions regarding rates, know that we are always working hard to minimize the impact on you. We are a not-for-profit organization, and we are accountable to you, our members, not outside investors.

Remember that there are a number of options available to you for energy savings. For example, you can:

- **Request an audit**—With this FREE service, our energy advisor will come into your home, evaluate your energy use and explain areas to save.
- **Implement energy-efficiency improvements**—Relatively

simple actions can add up to savings. This includes plastic on your windows during the winter, closing your curtains in the heat of summer, adjusting your thermostat a degree or two (down in the winter and up in the summer).

- **Sign up for budget billing**—Pay the same amount on your electric bill every month (accounts are analyzed in January and July). This takes away the fear of the unknown.
- **Fill out a rebate form**—If you have purchased an EnergyStar appliance, installed a new central air unit or insulated your home, we have rebates available for those items and others.

Over the next several months, watch for newsletter articles for more information regarding the cost-of-service study and rate structuring process.

Visit our website at butlerrec.coop for more information or contact us if you're interested in learning about additional ways to save.



Bryce Bruns



Rhett Lammers



Kayla Siemens

Students help at Butler County REC this summer

Once again this summer, Butler County REC had extra hands helping. Bryce Bruns, Rhett Lammers and Kayla Siemens—all living in Allison and all North Butler High School, Greene, graduates—spent their days with us.

Bruns was with us for a third summer. This fall he will return to Iowa State University, Ames, and his studies in agriculture. Lammers joined us for the first time this summer. He will attend Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon, in the fall to become a power lineman. Siemens has worked for us for two summers. She attends Upper Iowa University in Fayette and will be a junior. She is majoring in accounting.

Bruns and Lammers helped at both our Allison and Horton warehouses, and Siemens helped in the office.

Stay back and stay safe

Working with electricity can be a dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. *USA Today* lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why for your cooperative, safety is the priority.

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, our members. We strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to you, but equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance—and your help!

Distractions can be deadly

If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews—and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory. Our crews work best without a pet “supervising.”

We recognize that for your family's safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize our employees by their logo'd shirts and the service trucks with our name and logo on them.

Move over and slow down

In addition to giving lineworkers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over and slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help us.



**7,200 VOLT LINES
16 YEARS ON THE JOB
RESTORING POWER TO 500 MEMBERS**

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

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.



Electric Co-ops



Consumers served per mile: **8**
Revenue: **\$19,000**

Other Electric Utilities



Consumers served per mile: **32**
Revenue: **\$79,000**

Sources: EIA, 2017 data. Includes revenue and consumer averages per mile of line.

Save with rebates



Your Touchstone Energy cooperative is here to help you save with rebates.

Purchasing an Energy Star appliance? ✓

Installing an HVAC system? ✓

Insulating or weatherizing? ✓

Buying LED bulbs? ✓

Needing an electric water heater? ✓

Contact us today for more information. We're your source for saving!

Is a power line insulated? (And other myths debunked)

The following Q-and-A should clear up some common misconceptions about power lines:

What if I see a downed power line?

Vacate the area, and call 9-1-1. Do not return to the area until you are given the go-ahead by authorities.

Can I tell from looking (or listening) if a downed power line is still live?

Absolutely not. A live wire may not spark or arc, and it may not make any noise at all (although it could).

Where might downed power lines be?

A downed power line might be in the street, ditch or field after a bad storm or car accident or lurking in flood waters or under debris, trees or other objects.

If a line is on the ground, is it dead?

No, even if the power is off in your area. Not only should you not touch it, but the surrounding ground and any metal objects nearby could be energized and extremely dangerous, even deadly.

Why might a power line be down or damaged?

A car accident, severe weather or in some cases it's caused by another unforeseeable reason, such as a storm-damaged tree or an animal.

Why can a bird sit on a power line and not be hurt? Doesn't that mean the line is insulated?

No. Lines are sometimes coated for protection against the elements

but still deadly upon contact. A bird or other animal can sit on a power line because there is no path to ground. If the animal comes in contact with the utility pole or other grounded source, it will be electrocuted.

Do different types of utility lines look different?

Sometimes, but for the most part, the non-utility professional cannot know what type of line it is and what it carries (electricity, phone service and so on) just by looking. You also can't tell how much voltage it is carrying.

What if my car comes in contact with a downed power line?

Do not get out or try to drive over it. Call 9-1-1 and wait for utility personnel to de-energize the line. If you smell gas or if there is a fire, exit your car with a solid jump landing on both feet (but don't touch the car at the same time). DO NOT WALK, but hop away.

Can I help someone who has been in an accident involving a downed line?

No. Do not go near the scene and warn others not to do so.

Contact us with any questions about downed lines, and for more information about electrical safety, visit our website and SafeElectricity.org.



Save energy with new paint job

While the weather's still warm outside, consider having the outside of your house painted—and save some energy in the process.

A coat of fresh paint on your house can boost more than just curb appeal when you use an energy-efficient paint additive designed to reflect the summer heat.

Paint additives are designed to insulate the materials on your home's exterior. The additives come in a powder, which you can stir into any paint or coating without changing the texture or color of the paint.

As the paint dries, tiny, non-toxic ceramic bits in the additives form a layer that reflects radiant and solar heat away from the surface instead of absorbing it. In the summer, that means your air conditioning won't have to work as hard to fend off the outdoor heat.

Used indoors, the paint additives can benefit your bottom line in the winter, too. The energy-efficient layer reflects heat back into the room that normally would be lost to the cold outdoors.



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



Employees volunteer during Kids' Day at Butler County Fair

Butler County REC employees believe in service to their communities. In June, at the Butler County Fair, a group of employees served free hot dogs, potato chips and bottled water to 240 people on Kids' Day.

Those participating were (left to right) Mandy Brouwer, billing clerk; Anne Sesker, public relations specialist; Sandi Miller, office and human resources manager; John Endelman, operations manager; John Groen, GIS coordinator; Mike Miller, mechanic/warehouseman; Jon Oltmann, coordinating crew chief; Jon's wife, Diane Oltmann; and Tyler Aukes, first-class lineman.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Jennifer Judson-Harms, New Hampton, who won a \$25 bill credit from *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

The magazine published her recipe for pork marinade in the July 2019 issue.

Do you have a recipe that everyone asks for? Consider sending it to *Living with Energy in Iowa*. If yours is chosen, you will earn a \$25 power bill credit. Page 9 of every issue details how to submit your recipe either by email or by mail to the magazine's headquarters.

If you're looking for a new recipe, visit livingwithenergyiniowa.com, click on Recipe Archive at the top and search by main ingredient and/or category.

Enjoy a new recipe tonight!

Biretz attends Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Morgan Biretz, a senior this fall at Wapsie Valley High School, Fairbank, represented Butler County REC on the 61st annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The trip took place June 14-20, and she joined more than 1,900 other students from across the nation. A total of 38 students represented Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives.

Students on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour participated in leadership training, engaged in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jumpstarted their national peer network, learned about electric cooperatives and toured the monuments and museums of Washington, D.C.

Of her experience, Biretz said,

"Being able to go on the Youth Tour has single handedly been the best experience of my life. I will be forever grateful to the REC for choosing me to go. It was an honor to represent Butler County REC while in D.C. I will certainly remember this whole experience for the rest of my life."

Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative. Nationally, nearly 50,000 students have participated in this program over the decades.

This winter, Butler County REC will again be accepting applications for the Youth Tour. We offer \$500 college scholarships for the top three students who apply. In the coming months, look for more information in



Morgan Biretz

our newsletter and on our website and Facebook page. In addition, you can visit www.youthtour.coop.

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