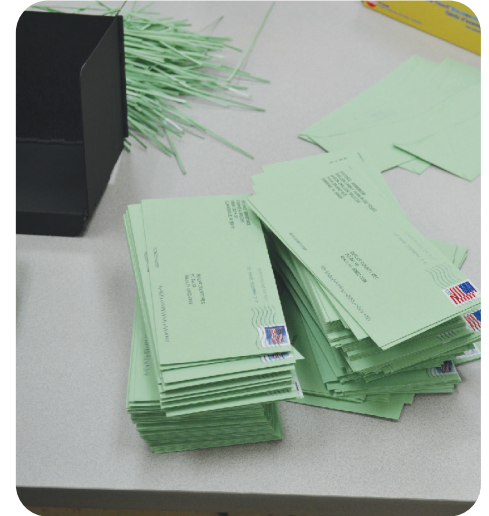


WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Directors elected to serve on the Butler County REC board for three-year terms are (l to r) Tim Schrage, Gerald Schmitt, and Leland Boyd.



We received over 430 mail-in ballots for the 2020 director election.

## Directors re-elected to serve Butler County REC

Members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative re-elected three incumbent directors at your 83rd annual meeting on March 28. Re-elected were Gerald Schmitt, Rockford; Leland Boyd, Charles City; and Tim Schrage, Allison.

Due to concerns of the coronavirus, the board of directors felt it was irresponsible to hold the annual meeting in its traditional format. Therefore, at their March meeting the directors exercised their right to amend the Butler County REC by-laws to accept mail-in ballots for determining a quorum for director elections.

The morning of the annual meeting, election tellers, along with corporate attorney Dennis Puckett, opened and counted over 430 mail-in ballots to establish the results of the election.

Following the ballot count, the board of directors held an organizational meeting and elected the following officers: 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.

The 2020 Butler County REC annual report is available on our website at [butlerrec.coop](http://butlerrec.coop), ABOUT US, Board and Mission. If you would like a hard copy, please contact us at [butler@butlerrec.coop](mailto:butler@butlerrec.coop) or 319.267.2726.

Thank you to everyone who returned their mail-in ballot. It was greatly appreciated!



(L to R) Dennis Puckett, Gary Doehrmann, and Mandy Brouwer count ballots for the director election.

### Butler County REC COVID-19 update

As an essential business, although our offices remain open, we ask that members wishing to speak to employees regarding energy efficiency, rebates, new services, and so on contact us by calling at 319-267-2726 or emailing to [butler@butlerrec.coop](mailto:butler@butlerrec.coop). Protocols and processes are in place to protect the safety and health of our employees and members. We are practicing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines, including social distancing, frequent hand washing and office disinfecting, and covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue. Stay home and stay safe!

# Four common culprits of electrical fires

May is National Electrical Safety Month, the perfect time to evaluate the safety of your home's electrical system. Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires. Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.

- 1. Electrical outlets:** Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged, or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.
- 2. Electrical wiring:** Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, contact a qualified electrician.
- 3. Overloaded cords and outlets:** Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system, and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord or you have an outlet that looks like the one above, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.
- 4. Old appliances:** Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.



## Reflect and honor: May is Military Appreciation Month

On Memorial Day this year, be sure to reflect on the sacrifices of our country's veterans and their families. Your electric cooperative is especially thankful for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms their service affords us in this great country of ours.

May is Military Appreciation Month, and in the words of John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Your electric cooperative is grateful to have veterans serving our members, and we are proud to serve veterans and their families within our local communities.

We are pleased to be a part of the electric cooperative network that honors and supports veterans of all ages, ranks and branches of the military. Please join us in taking a moment to show your appreciation to a veteran.

**Our offices are closed on  
Memorial Day,  
Monday, May 25.**

**As always, our phones  
are answered 24/7 for  
outages and  
emergencies.**

## 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](http://www.butlerrec.coop)

**Franklin REC**  
1560 Highway 65, PO Box 437  
Hampton, IA 50441-0437  
(641) 456-2557  
[www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop)

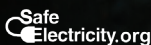
**Prairie Energy Cooperative**  
2099 Highway 3 West, PO Box 353  
Clarion, IA 50525-0353  
(515) 532-2805  
[www.prairieenergy.coop](http://www.prairieenergy.coop)

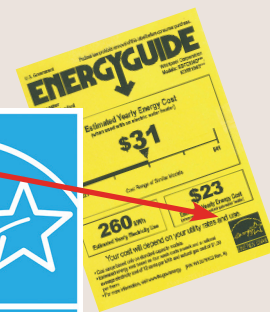
If your complaint is related to your cooperative's service rather than its rates, and your cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 1-877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines,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

## WHAT SHIMMERS And Shines

Use **SUMMER OUTDOOR LIGHTING** Safely

- Only use lighting approved for outdoor use.
- Make sure lighting has a reputable seal of approval, such as UL.
- Use outdoor-rated bulbs.
- Use recommended bulb wattage.
- Inspect all cords and lights for damage or wear before using them.
- Only use outdoor-rated extension cords and do not overload them.
- Do not use nails or metal tacks to hang light strands.
- Make sure your outlets are GFCI-protected.

For more information:  Safe Electricity.org



## Appliance rebates

Contact us for appliance rebates! To qualify for a rebate, the appliance must be Energy Star rated. Look for this logo on the Energy Guide before you purchase.

## Selecting an AC and using it more efficiently

In our climate, using an air conditioner (AC) is necessary to staying comfortable in the summer months. High temperatures can be stressful to people and the electrical system. With a few quick tips from the Energy Education Council and knowledge of home cooling systems, you can help ease some of that stress.

If you are updating your air conditioning system, make sure to pick the one that is right for you. Here are some tips to keep in mind to help you select an air conditioning system that best fits your needs and how to use your air conditioner more efficiently:

- Central air conditioners can cool an entire home more efficiently than window air conditioners. However, if you just need to cool a single, small space, a window air conditioner can do the job.
- Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) compares the cooling capacity of an air conditioner with electrical requirements. The higher the EER, the more efficient the air conditioner.
- Look for the Energy Star label for a high-efficiency air conditioner.
- Make sure your home has the insulation it needs. EnergySavers.gov has information about the best insulation to use in different geographic areas.
- Prepare your air conditioner for the hard work it will do over the summer months. Turn off power to the air conditioner before you work on it. Clean or replace filters. Outside, clear leaves and other debris away from the condensing unit. Hose off any accumulated dirt.
- A programmable thermostat allows you to change your home's temperature based on your daily patterns. The thermostat can allow temperatures to go higher while you are away, then cool off when you are back in the home.

And don't forget your Touchstone Energy cooperative has central air rebates. Contact us to learn more about central air units and our incentives!





## Risse awarded Basin Power scholarship

Jacob Risse, a freshman at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, was chosen as Butler County REC's \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship recipient. He is majoring in economics and minoring in mathematics.

Of the honor, Jacob said, "I want to thank you for selecting me to be the recipient of the Basin Electric scholarship; I am truly blessed to receive support from you for my education at Hillsdale College. . . .No matter where my education takes me, I will remain proud of where I have come from and never forget the important role electric cooperatives have played in my life."

Jacob is a 2019 graduate of Wapsie Valley High School, Fairbank, and is the son of Thomas and Jodi Risse, Sumner.



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

## Whalen to retire

Butler County REC economic development director Rick Whalen's successful career with rural electric cooperatives is coming to a close this summer.

After graduating from Mason City High School, Whalen joined the Navy, spending 13 months in Vietnam and the Philippines and serving our country for three-and-a-half years.

He then graduated from Hawkeye Institute of Technology with a degree in electronics and worked for a television repair company in Hampton, eventually opening his own television, stereo, and sound system business.

In 1979, Whalen's lengthy journey with rural electric cooperatives began, when he was hired as the member services director for Franklin REC. He then moved to economic development and key accounts at Butler County REC in 1989, eventually adding Franklin REC and Grundy County REC. Over the years he has also worked for Clarke Electric Cooperative, Pella Cooperative Electric Association, and Consumers Energy.

Rick has helped to develop a number of industrial parks and speculative buildings and helped countless business owners achieve their dreams through the USDA loan program. He is a member of several boards and was named National Rural Economic Developer of the Year from the National Rural Economic Development Association in 2018.

Rick will continue his work to have the Reeve Generating Station south of Hampton named a historical landmark. The plant was the first generation plant west of the Mississippi River financed by the Rural Electric Administration. "I'd like to pursue that further to make it the National REA Museum," he stated. He also plans to golf and would like to read to kids in school.

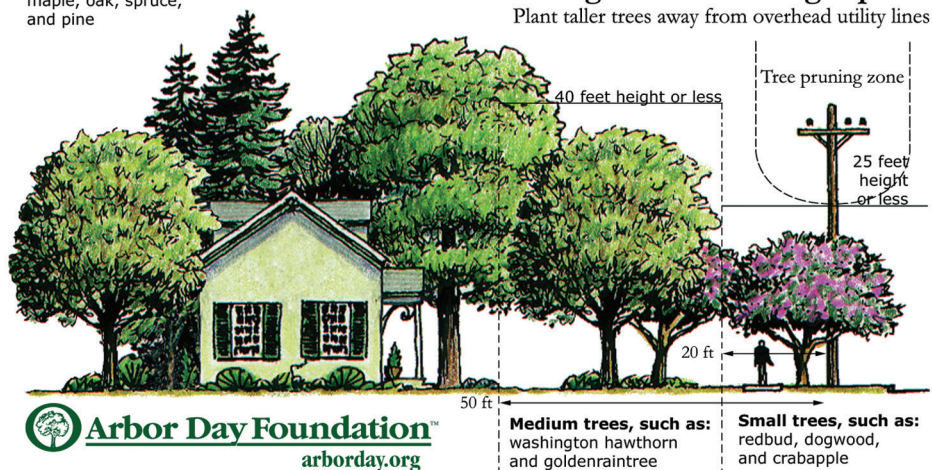
Rick and his wife Beth are the parents of four children and they have three grandchildren. Congratulations, Rick! Enjoy your retirement!



**Tall trees, such as:**  
maple, oak, spruce,  
and pine

### Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



**Medium trees, such as:**  
washington hawthorn  
and goldenrain tree

**Small trees, such as:**  
redbud, dogwood,  
and crabapple

**INtouch** is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative  
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Craig Codner, CEO • EDITOR: Anne Sesker, CCC

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.