

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

November 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Luebbers volunteers for the children

Erica Luebbers (right) of Sumner knows where she will be every year during the last week of July.

Luebbers, a school nurse for the Sumner-Fredericksburg school district, was nominated by Amanda Peterson, Butler County REC member and Waverly resident, for the inaugural Shine the Light contest held by Iowa electric cooperatives. Luebbers serves as the assistant director of Royal Family KIDS (RFK) Camp, a wholly volunteer-run organization that is part of the For The Children organization.

Peterson, part of the camp registration and mid-week birthday party teams, entered Luebbers saying, “Erica volunteers many hours to organize and facilitate a summer camp for local foster kids. Not only does she do so willingly, she also uses her own time and resources to make the camp happen.”

The camp, held near Sumner every July since 2011, is for children in foster care, ages 6-12, referred by the Department of Human Services offices in a 10-county area. “The goal of the camp is creating memories—empowering kids who have had their power taken away,” commented Luebbers.

In 2010, a friend of Erica’s helped at an RFK camp in Florida and loved it. Five

volunteers from the area then went through intensive training in Omaha with the goal of opening a camp in our area. The first year of the Sumner camp saw 18 campers, with 24 the following year. The 32 campers they now host is capacity.

With 52 volunteers, there is a social worker on staff and two camp nurses. Each camp counselor is assigned two campers and has a support person should they need them. Included in the volunteer roster are a camp “grandma and grandpa,” who “love on the kids and pass out the mail at supper time,” said Luebbers.

Campers are exposed to crafts and outdoor activities, always given a choice as to what activity in which they want to participate, and volunteers are constantly modeling manners because “a week really matters. The camp changes lives,” commented Luebbers. As one veteran attendee commented to newer attendees, “These people love you and are going to keep you safe.”

Each year a mid-week birthday party is held for campers, some of whom do not know their birth date. The kids dress up and each receive a birthday present. The Sumner RFK camp was presented an



award by their national organization for the uniqueness of their party. In addition, a graduation is held at the end of the week.

Planning for the next year typically begins about five weeks after camp has ended for the year. Once-a-month meetings are held until closer to camp week. The rules that must be followed are intense. Usually around the month of June, a half day of training is held for new staff members, around 10 people, and an additional eight hours for all staff.

Luebbers, when asked about her work with the camp, said, “I can’t not do it. Watching the relationships is amazing.”

Thank you, Amanda, for nominating Erica, and congratulations, Erica! You are doing amazing work.



Butler County REC will be closed Thursday, Nov. 25, and Friday, Nov. 26, for the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have an emergency or outage, give us a call.

We'll answer: 888-267-2726.

Cold? Use your space heater safely

Electric space heaters can help quickly take the chill off, but they can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative urges everyone in your home to understand the importance of using space heaters safely:

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards.
- Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.
- Make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.
- Place the heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Space heaters have one purpose—to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
- Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from combustible liquids and flammable items.
- Never allow pets or children near an electric heater.
- Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater.
- If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it.
- Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.

In addition, space heaters are not inexpensive to run. Be sure to contact us to find out how much using your space heater might add to your electric bill.



Our Touchstone Energy Values



Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork

Save with rebates!

Your electric cooperative offers members a variety of incentives for new electric heating and cooling systems, including air source and geothermal heat pumps.

Rebates are also available for insulating and weatherizing your home, appliances, LED lighting, and additional options to help you save.



Contact us for details and rebate forms



Cook up a new recipe for the holidays

Looking for a new recipe for the holidays? Visit the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* website at IECLmagazine.com for a searchable recipe archive.

Have a recipe everyone loves? *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine is always looking for recipes to publish. If yours is chosen, you will earn a \$25 power bill credit!



During this season of giving thanks, we want to share our genuine appreciation for you. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you!

It's time to deck the halls

Your local Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you decorate AND save money this holiday season with our LED holiday light rebate! Purchase any LED-lighted item and *we will rebate that item for up to \$2*, with no limit on the number of items.

LED lights use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs, their lifespan is up to 50,000 hours outdoors and twice as long indoors, and they are safe.

[Visit our website for a lighting rebate form!](#)



- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college. Contact your electric cooperative for information.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with Northwest Iowa Community College (NWICC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships. Recipients must be students at NWICC studying Industrial and Commercial Wiring, Powerline, or Powerline Technology. Contact Sheila Van Engen, 800-352-4907 ext. 246, or svanengen@nwicc.edu. Application deadline is March 1, 2022.
- Corn Belt Power also partners with Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa, to offer one \$500 scholarship for students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. For more information, contact Institutional Advancement, 712-362-0450 ext. 0491, or institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu. Application deadline is March 1, 2022.

BE SAFE DURING THE **HO-HO-HOLIDAYS** 10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY JOLLY



Before you plan out your new holiday lighting scheme or repeat last year's festive design, keep these 10 safety tips in mind when decorating outdoors:

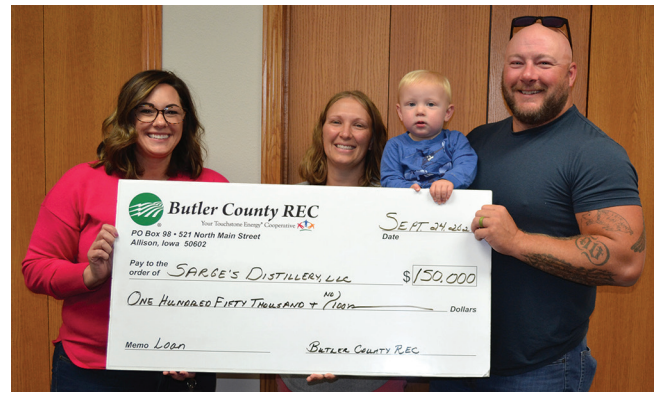
- 1 Do not toss light strands up into the air. They could get too close to or come into contact with a power line.
- 2 Before using a ladder, always look up and assess all power line locations.
- 3 Carry a ladder horizontally when transporting it.
- 4 Keep at least 10 feet between yourself (and any item you are holding) and a power line.
- 5 Do not use staples or nails or tacks to secure light strands, cords, wires or extension cords.
- 6 String together no more than the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- 7 Plug all lights and extension cords into GFCI-protected outlets.
- 8 Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- 9 Do not use frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged cords, plugs or lights.
- 10 Use only lights and products certified by a reputable testing lab.

Sarge's Distillery, LLC, newest loan recipient

Recently, Katie LaBree, Butler County REC business development manager, closed a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan with Sarge's Distillery, LLC, in Fredericksburg. Owned by Chad Wendel, Sarge's Distillery & Woodland Farm Inn is located at the former Farm House Winery and B&B on the east edge of Fredericksburg.

Wendel's long-term plans for the business include craft spirits to be sold wholesale and retail, an events venue, a food venue for catering, and an inn for overnight accommodations. He plans to use locally sourced grains and resources, within a 25-mile radius, to produce the small batch craft spirits—whiskey, vodka, gin, rum, and bourbon.

We are proud of our commitment to communities and our hand in helping to realize dreams. If you are interested in our USDA loan program, contact Katie at 888-267-2726.



(L to R) Katie LaBree, Danielle Wendel, Colt Wendel, Chad Wendel

High school juniors: We want YOU!



High school juniors whose parents are Butler County REC members or residents of Aplington, Fairbank, Fredericksburg, or Readlyn are invited to apply for the **FREE Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.**, set for June 18-24, 2022. We'll select one lucky student to participate.

Approximately 40 students in Iowa will be chosen by their local electric cooperatives to attend. While on the trip, Iowa participants will join students from co-ops around the country in visiting various memorials and monuments, touring the U.S. capitol, and speaking with a few of Iowa's elected officials.

Are you planning to attend college? We offer **\$500 college scholarships** for the top three students applying for the Youth Tour. Watch our website, Facebook page, and future newsletters for more information on this all-expense paid trip, or contact us at 888-267-2726.

\$25 bill credit winner announced

Check out the September issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine to see the recipe from Jennifer Judson-Harms, New Hampton, that earned her a \$25 bill credit.

Jennifer's recipe for Chicken Pasta Salad was chosen for publication, along with other Iowa cooperative members' favorite chicken recipes.

Congratulations, Jennifer!



Give yourself the gift of auto pay!

Through December, when you sign up for automatic bill pay with us, your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 bill credit for the month in which you enroll.

As a new sign-up, if you mail in a form (for checking or savings), you will receive a one-time \$5 bill credit. Forms can be found on our website at butlerrec.coop, or call the office and we will send you the form. Sign up through SmartHub on our website (for checking, savings, or credit card), and you will receive a one-time \$10 bill credit.

The promotion runs through December 31, 2021.



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smart choices 

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