

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September 2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



BCREC's Miller named honorary survivor

In July of 2008, Mike Miller was diagnosed with testicular cancer. Fifteen years later, in July of 2023, Mike was named the Butler County Relay for Life honorary survivor.

Born and raised in Allison, Mike has been with Butler County REC for 10 years as our mechanic/warehouseman. Prior to becoming a part of our family and during the time of his cancer diagnosis and treatments, he was employed by Monsanto.

Following Mike's diagnosis and six-week surgery recovery, he had radiation treatments for 21 days—Monday through Friday—at the Cancer Treatment Center in Waterloo.

Although the actual radiation, directed at his stomach, only took two minutes each time, the side effects lasted much longer. He was tired and sick, off at least eight weeks from work. Nausea medication, though, did give him some relief.

Mike said, "Throughout the treatments, we had so many people who stepped up to help with transportation and food for our family. We will always be grateful."

Nine years ago, after six years of scans and checkups, he was medically cleared.

Mike and his wife, Jodi, have four kids: Clayton, Carter, Gracie, Makenzie. Carter and his girlfriend, Kayla, are expecting Mike and Jodi's first grandchild in November.

Mike is very appreciative of the support of Jodi and his family throughout his diagnosis and recovery. "I also want to thank the Relay for Life committee for being named honorary survivor this year and everyone who attends and supports this great cause."

Mike, we're grateful for you and are appreciative of all you do for us at Butler County REC!



(L to R) Butler County REC's Joel Noelting, first-class lineman, with Mike.

Interested in public service and leadership? High schoolers who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Butler County REC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area, and they are invited to register at www.IowaYouthTour.com by October 1.

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- **Tuesday, Oct. 3, 7:00 p.m.** – Cooperative Business Model
- **Thursday, Oct. 19, 7:00 p.m.** – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- **Thursday, Oct. 26, 7:00 p.m.** – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky participant will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by October 1 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

Attendees will also hear about the Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this weeklong trip to Washington, DC, slated for June 15-21, 2024. Butler County REC sponsors one high school student each year as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

WANTED: Rural Iowa high school students who have a passion for leadership

Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com



Driving behind farm equipment: Do your part

Spring planting and fall harvest are busy times. Farmers and workers have big equipment and implements on the road. Navigating roadways can be dangerous for farm equipment operators and auto drivers who follow them.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 410 farmers and farm workers died from work-related injuries in 2019 (the latest data available). Transportation incidents, which included tractor overturns, were the leading cause of death for these farmers and farm workers.

Follow these safety tips to make it safer for everyone involved.

Equipment operators

1. Make sure all flashers and lights are operational.
2. Drive as far to the right side of the road as possible when going around a curve.
3. Pull over and allow vehicles to pass when traffic builds behind you.
4. Take care at railroad crossings.
5. Avoid traveling during busy traffic times.
6. Be mindful of the height and width of machinery, watching power lines, bridges, and other hazards.
7. Along with turn signals, use hand signals.
8. Stay rested; do not drive when you are too tired or hungry.
9. Keep a first-aid kit in case of accidents.

Auto drivers

Think about how long it will take to get to your destination and add extra time for busy farm roads.

1. Give farmers plenty of room on the road.
 2. When passing, be sure you do so in a passing zone and that there is clear visibility around farm equipment.
 3. Go slow. Farm operators often stop or turn into fields. In addition, cars going at or over the speed limit can catch up to farm machinery quickly.
 4. Do not assume that a farmer can move over in narrow areas.
 5. Honk or motion when passing farmers.
 6. Do not tailgate; the farmer often cannot see you.
 7. Do not pass and then slow suddenly in front of equipment with implements behind it or farm trucks full of grain. They cannot stop quickly.
 8. Farmers make very wide turns; give them plenty of time and room.
- For information about safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



SHARE the ROAD with Farmers

Be safe.
Be Courteous.

Farm season means sharing the road with large farm equipment. Farmers must move slowly in large equipment, but public roads are often the only available routes.

When you find yourself following or meeting large farm equipment on the road, do the following to keep everyone safe:

- 1 Be alert and cautious, and give large farm equipment and other slow-moving vehicles space.
- 2 Do not pass if you are in a "No Passing Zone," or in any area where it is not safe to do so, such as intersections, bridges and railroad crossings, among others.
- 3 Be careful when you do get the chance to pass. Oftentimes, farmers will move their equipment over when it is safe to do so.
- 4 Do not tailgate.
- 5 Make sure the tractor is not trying to make a left turn before you pass on the left.

Share the road with care. Farmers are just trying to get to and from their job, too.

Source: Texas Table Top (Texas Farm Bureau)

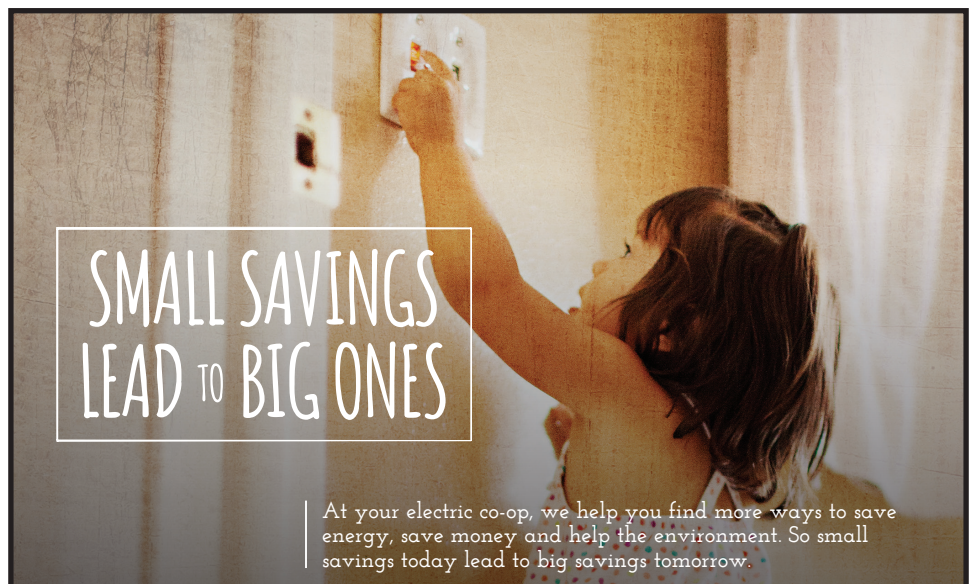
SafeElectricity.org®



Bill credit winner

When *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine requested vegetable dish recipes for their July 2023 issue, Butler County REC member Elinor Moeller sent in hers for Easy Scalloped Potatoes.

The recipe was published and earned Elinor a \$25 power bill credit. Congratulations, Elinor!



SMALL SAVINGS
LEAD TO BIG ONES

At your electric co-op, we help you find more ways to save energy, save money and help the environment. So small savings today lead to big savings tomorrow.



Week two Energy Trails Tour participants stand outside of Antelope Valley Station, Beulah, North Dakota. The Energy Trails Tour is offered three separate weeks each summer. BCREC's Anne Gardiner (third from right) and Katie LaBree (second from right) were in attendance.

BCREC employees, director hit the road for Energy Trails Tour

Electricity must be generated at the exact same time as you flip the switch to use it. Angela Catton, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative manager of member relations and development and Energy Trail Tour coordinator, begins each tour by comparing energy use to ordering food at a fast-food restaurant. "You place your order at the kiosk and expect it to be ready the moment you pull up to the drive-through window," she explains. "You 'order' electricity, expecting it to be there. On-time. Every time."

Behind this "simple" ordering process is a complex network of people, power plants, and transmission lines that work around the clock. Their mission: to ensure safe, affordable, reliable electricity is delivered to member homes, farms, and businesses the moment it is needed.

This summer, Katie LaBree, business development manager; Anne Gardiner, public relations specialist; Troy Feldman, director; and Teresa Feldman, Troy's wife, of Butler County REC joined members from thirteen other electric cooperatives from western and north central Iowa on a three-day excursion through the Dakotas to learn about where their electricity comes from and have some fun along the journey.

Those attending first visited Oahe Power Plant and Dam in Pierre, South Dakota, to understand the process of hydroelectric generation and the innovation of the rolled-earth dam that created Lake Oahe, the fourth largest reservoir in the United States. Next, it was a stop at Antelope Valley Station in Beulah, North Dakota, which included an overview of the model room and a guided walking tour of the power plant. The walking tour included stops at the turbine deck, control room, boiler, and observation deck on the 17th floor. The final stop on the tour was the Coteau Properties Company Freedom Mine where tour guests learned how lignite coal is produced at a surface mine and how the land is returned to its original state. A guided drive-through tour took members through active mining areas where they witnessed giant earthmoving equipment in action.

Over three educational and fun-filled days, participants gain a deeper understanding of the cooperative difference and the history of rural electric cooperatives.

In the market for a new electric water heater?

Contact us for information on the Marathon—offering durability, lightweight design, and a limited lifetime tank warranty for original purchaser. Generous rebate available!

Water heating saving ideas

- For households of 1-2 members, a setting of 115 degrees F may work.
- Install a water heater blanket.
- Drain 1-2 gallons from bottom of water heater each year to reduce sediment build up.
- Install heat traps on hot and cold water lines when it's time to replace your water heater.
- Insulate exposed hot water lines.
- Limit shower length to 5-7 minutes.
- Install water saving shower heads.
- Fix dripping faucets.
- Don't let the water run while brushing your teeth or shaving.



Carbon monoxide, your generator, and safety

Firing up one fuel-powered portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide (CO) as hundreds of combustion-engine cars, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Using a portable generator in a home, garage, or too close to an enclosed area is like starting a parking lot full of cars and letting the CO poison seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in minutes.

CO facts

CO is colorless and odorless. Poisoning can happen so quickly that exposed persons may become unconscious before recognizing any symptoms.

Each year in the U.S.:

- Approximately 85 individuals die from CO poisoning.
- Most deaths (81%) occur in residential locations.

Safety tips

To use a portable generator safely:

- Always position at least 20 feet away from your home, shed, cabin, camper, or trailer.
- Never operate one inside a home, on a porch, or near windows and doors.
- When shopping for a generator, look for one that gives off

reduced emissions.

- Also look for one that shuts off automatically when high levels of CO are present.
- Keep your generator well-maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- Operate it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool underneath.
- Ensure CO detectors are installed on every level of your home and near or in bedrooms.
- Test CO alarms monthly; also track their age. They need to be replaced every seven years.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and movable. A generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator will be able to create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

Besides portable generators, there are also standby generators—attached directly to the house and typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

To prevent feeding power back into the power grid and endangering electric line crews and others, standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. For the same reason, never plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system.

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Sweater weather: A good time to save energy

Although it has possibly been awhile since you needed to turn on the air conditioner, it's not quite time to crank up the heat. In fact, autumn is one of the best times of the year to save energy.

Here are some ideas:

- Layer your clothing. A sweater and a pair of socks can keep you warm enough without turning on the heat, probably for longer than you would expect.
- Throw extra blankets on the bed.
- Open the curtains during the day when the sun is up and close them at dark to keep cold air outside where it belongs.
- Stop drafts by caulking around windows, doors, and holes in exterior walls for cable and phone lines.
- Set a date for turning on the heat for the first time, like Halloween. And pay attention to your family's tolerance. If you need to wear gloves and a ski cap to stay warm while you watch TV, it might be time to activate the thermostat.



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