

## Do we have your current phone number?

Occasionally, Butler County REC may reach out to you regarding your account (we will never ask for payment over the phone) or work that is to be done on your property (tree trimming, construction, etc.).

Regarding work on your property, if we don't have a current phone number, we may not be able to let you know if we have to temporarily disrupt your service. We know this can be a hardship any time but especially if someone works from home.

Contact us at 888-267-2726 if you have recently changed your contact number.



## Bringing the heat: Let's grill!

### Tips for safe grilling

Make sure your next BBQ extravaganza is a sizzling success without any burns or mishaps. Here are some safety tips to follow:

- Only use grills outside.
- Keep your grill at least 10 feet from structures and on a flat, steady surface.
- Never leave your grill unattended while preheating, cooking, or cooling down.
- Do not wear loose or long clothing that can catch fire.
- Keep a water spray bottle beside your grill to tackle any flare ups.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby.

### Keeping your grill clean

Grills should undergo deep cleaning once or twice per year. Follow these steps to keep your gas grill in prime condition:

- Burn away buildup: Turn on the grill, close the lid and set the heat to maximum for at least 30 minutes.
  - Scrub it clean: In a bowl, mix warm water with soap and dip a wire brush into the mixture. Scrub the grates to remove any carbon buildup.
  - Let it cool: Allow the grill to cool down completely before storing it.
  - Regular maintenance: In between uses, preheat your grill and then scrape it off with a wire-bristled brush before adding food.
- Now you're ready to fire up the grill!

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  
BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

June 2024

Butler County REC is excited to announce the 2024 Member Appreciation Event dates! Mark your calendar for:

**Tuesday, July 30: Floyd County,** Floyd County Fairgrounds (Swartzrock Community Building)—2516 7 Mile Rd., Charles City

**Thursday, Aug. 1: Chickasaw County,** Big 4 Fairgrounds (show building)—499 Greenwood Ave., Nashua

**Tuesday, Aug. 6: Butler County,** Butler County Fairgrounds (new multi-species livestock building)—101 S. Main St., Allison



From 5-7 p.m., Butler County REC employees and directors will be serving grilled hamburgers, baked beans, a variety of potato chips, cookies, ice

cream, lemonade, and water. Join us for a sit-down meal or stop by for a drive-thru meal, register for prizes, and spend time with your neighbors.

Each family will receive a gift, along with the chance to win prizes.\*

Your July *InTouch* newsletter will have additional information regarding the events.

We look forward to seeing you later this summer for a relaxing night of good food and good company!

*\*Members only entered into drawing—must be the name on the account/bill holder's name. Members allowed to only win one item.*

## EnergyWise Renewables program supports renewable energy

Butler County REC's EnergyWise Renewables program was established in 2006 to give co-op members the opportunity to support member-owned renewable energy projects in its service territory. Initially, the program supported only wind generation. Today the program includes solar and any type of distributed generation that provides an alternative or enhancement to the traditional electric power system. All contributions go to support small-scale distributed generation in our service territory. Butler County REC does not charge for the administration of this program.

To take part in this voluntary program, complete the information below and return to Butler County REC. If you already contribute, there is nothing you need to do now. Your participation is greatly appreciated.



### EnergyWise Renewables Participation Form

I wish to support (the amount you select will be automatically added to your monthly power bill):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 kilowatt-hours (\$1.50 per month)  | <input type="checkbox"/> 200 kilowatt-hours (\$3.00 per month) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 300 kilowatt-hours (\$4.50 per month)  | <input type="checkbox"/> 400 kilowatt-hours (\$6.00 per month) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other per month_____. Maximum contribution is 3,000 kilowatt-hours (\$45.00 per month)                                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-time contribution. I wish to support EnergyWise Renewables with a one-time contribution. My check for _____ is enclosed. |  |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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521 North Main • PO Box 98 • Allison, IA 50602  
PHONES: 319.267.2726 or 888.267.2726 • PAY-BY-PHONE: 855.918.3803 • FAX: 319.267.2566  
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
WEBSITE: [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop) • E-MAIL: [butler@butlerrec.coop](mailto:butler@butlerrec.coop)  
Craig Codner, CEO • EDITOR: Anne Gardiner, CCC

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Follow us on Instagram at [instagram.com/butlercountyrrec](https://instagram.com/butlercountyrrec)



Pay your bill online with SmartHub

smart choices Sign up for our e-newsletter at [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop)

## Annual meeting bill credit drawing winners announced

Thank you to the almost 500 members who returned their director-election ballots! We appreciate you taking the time to participate in one of the most important cooperative principles: Democratic Member Control.

The following members' names were randomly drawn from the ballots and received a bill credit on their May 2024 billing statements:

### \$20

John Angstman, Dumont  
Edgar Bahlmann, Waverly  
Dale Beckman, Cedar Falls  
Deloris Benson, Greene  
James Bochman, Greene  
Harm Eggena, III, Rockford  
Kathy Eick, Plainfield  
Four O's, LLC, Rockford  
Garden Avenue Farms, Waverly  
Byron Johnson, Aplington  
Tracy Juhl, Greene  
Gary Kalvig, Ionia  
Roger Kregel, Dumont  
David Leerhoff, Clarksville

### \$20, cont'd

Linda McCarville, New Hampton  
Joel Meyer, Sumner  
Wendell Milligan, Charles City  
Steve Reints, Shell Rock  
Dennis Ungs, Jr., New Hampton  
Woodford Farms, LLC, Roanoke, IL

### \$50

Gail Carolan, Waucoma  
James Leerhoff, Clarksville  
Wendi Nederhoff, Greene  
Keith Wright, Charles City

### \$100

Larry Wedeking, Plainfield

CONGRATULATIONS!



OUR OFFICE IS CLOSED  
THURSDAY, JULY 4,  
IN OBSERVANCE OF  
INDEPENDENCE DAY.

OUR PHONES ARE  
ANSWERED 24/7:  
888-267-2726.

## New bill print and line item coming this summer

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO  
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

At Butler County REC, we are always striving to enhance the lives of our members and their families.

Later this summer, we will be introducing a new, easier-to-read bill. Along with the new look, you may also notice a new line item—Demand Charge. At this time, it will not include an amount—we wanted our members to become used to seeing the line item.

Demand has been compared to a car. *Energy* (kWh—the usage on your bill) would be miles driven, shown on the odometer. *Demand* (kW) would be the speed at which the miles are driven, shown on the speedometer. For example, any car can drive 100 miles (usage, or kWh) but the size or capacity of the engine determines if it can go 100 miles per hour (demand, or kW).

Another analogy would be a church. During the week, a church would not need to be that large; on Sundays, a little larger; and at Easter and Christmas, very large—or peak attendance/usage. No matter how much or how little the building

is used, the demand for the size of the building is Easter and Christmas attendance. The demand for energy, therefore, is also the peak—the usage peak.

The demand charge, instrumental in the billing process, can be noncoincidental or coincidental. *Noncoincidental* is the highest demand recorded for a member during the billing period (our normal billing period is a calendar month). *Coincidental* is the demand recorded for a member at a specified time within the billing period. This is the time that Corn Belt Power Cooperative, our generation and transmission cooperative, reaches its peak usage for the month. Our membership's power usage contributes to the Corn Belt Power peak—along with the usage from the additional Corn Belt Power members.

How does demand affect you? When REC members use power during a peak time (a time of high demand), that means the power bill from Corn Belt Power to Butler County REC is higher. At this time, this is not reflected on your bill, so you are not aware of the price fluctuations and therefore, not receiving a clear picture.

Demand billing not only helps the cooperative more fairly allocate costs, it also helps members. You have more control over your usage and therefore your bill. During a peak time (shown on the peak gauge on our website homepage), you can be even more diligent about shutting off lights, not running appliances, and adjusting the thermostat.

This summer, Butler County REC will have a cost-of-service study conducted. During the study, demand charges will be researched so that costs can be allocated fairly across our system. The last time we had a study done was in 2019.

In the five years since that study, inflation has increased from 1.81% to 3.5% and went as high as 9.1% in June of 2022. This matters because inflation affects costs and your standard of living. Higher inflation means people's dollars don't go as far.

Along with inflation, Butler County REC has not escaped supply chain issues, which has also led to higher prices. As I stated in my February column, during that time we have seen, on average, a 37% increase in the cost of trucks, a 79% increase in wire, an 84% increase in poles, and a 77% increase in transformers. These price increases are not sustainable in the long-term without some adjustments. We are anticipating that our cost-of-service study will provide answers.

We are dedicated to serving you. If you have questions for us, please call us at 888-267-2726.

## Questions about solar? We can help.

Iowa Choice Renewables is here to help you make the best decisions about your energy needs.



### What do we offer?

- **Solar calculator.** Visit our website, [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop) - Energy Solutions - Renewable Energy - Solar Calculator to complete a brief questionnaire to find out if solar may be right for you.
- **Energy assessments.** Before you purchase a solar array, we will help you identify energy-efficiency improvements to reduce the size of the solar array needed.
- **On-site solar.** We have done the work to find high-quality, utility-grade solar arrays that will be sized to reach your energy goals. We can provide you with all the solar products and services for interconnection to the electrical grid.

### Who do you contact?

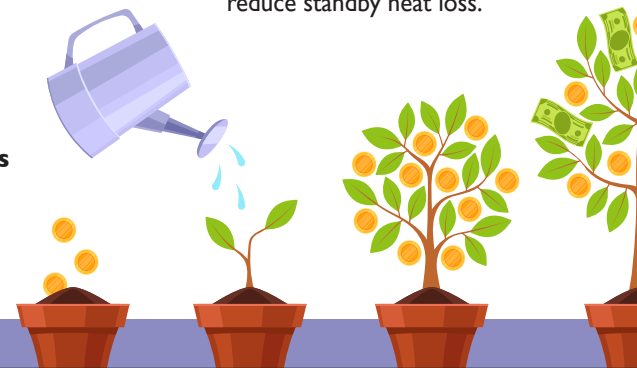
Call Matt Mahoney, energy services manager, at 888-267-2726.

## 5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. **Raise your thermostat.**  
The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.
2. **Install window coverings** like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.

3. **Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping** around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.
4. **Run ceiling fans** for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.
5. **Lower your water heater thermostat** to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



Source: Dept. of Energy

## Power up your lawn care: Go electric

By Anne Prince, NRECA

Electric lawn equipment is at the forefront of the changing landscape of lawn and garden care.

**Benefits of electric equipment** Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more reliable, cost-effective, and efficient.

Electric mowers are lighter, so they are easier to maneuver around tight turns and available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind, and riding models.

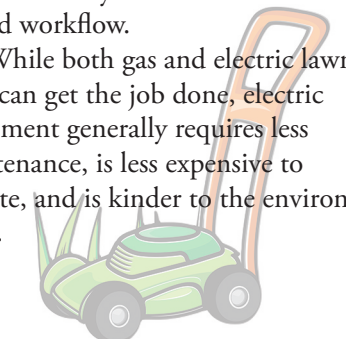
Like mowers, electric blowers, string trimmers, and chainsaws have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance, and are quieter.

### Choose electric equipment to meet your needs

Electric lawn tools have some limitations, so the size and terrain of your outdoor space are important considerations. When comparing mowers, consider the torque rating—the driving force behind a blade's rotation. On average, electric lawnmowers generate less torque than gas mowers. If you have an outdoor space that includes overgrown brush, tall grass, or hills and dips, torque is a key factor.

Choosing the right mower is particularly important for spaces larger than half an acre. If you have a large property, consider purchasing an extra battery to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

While both gas and electric lawn tools can get the job done, electric equipment generally requires less maintenance, is less expensive to operate, and is kinder to the environment.



SHINE THE LIGHT



Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperatives  
of Iowa

Nominate a local volunteer  
and they could win  
\$3,000 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at  
[IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com)