

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

March 2025

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

BCREC business-only annual meeting to be held March 26

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

Wednesday, March 26, your board of directors will meet at 1 p.m. at the Butler County REC warehouse in Allison at 619 N. Railroad St. for their business-only annual meeting, which will not include a meal, entertainment, or gifts.

Cooperatives follow seven principles, one of which is Democratic Member Control. As a member of Butler County REC, you vote for the directors who govern the board. Mail-in ballots were sent to each member at the beginning of this month, and votes will be accepted through 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday,

March 25, at our office in Allison. The ballots count toward meeting quorum requirements. The director election will take place at the annual meeting.

Members are invited to attend this event, which will be similar in format to the last two years. Action will not be taken at the annual meeting on any other matters brought before the board. Should members have an issue to be addressed by the board or want member action taken on a matter, the issue should be brought to the attention of the board so that it may be considered and possibly included for action at a future meeting.

Election results will be on our social media platforms and website after the March 26 meeting and will appear in your May *InTouch* newsletter. Feel free to contact us at 888.267.2726 beginning Thursday, March 27, for meeting results.

We are looking forward to seeing you at our fourth annual member appreciation events this summer!

ECA adjustment announced for 2025

Your board of directors has approved the 2025 energy cost adjustment (ECA) factor, reflected as “Energy Cost Adj” on your January usage bill received in February.

The ECA is a pass-through from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier. The amount of the ECA will be 0.00126. The board makes a final determination on the ECA each year after careful analysis of Butler County REC’s year-end financial information.

Call us at 888.267.2726 if you have questions about the ECA factor.



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www.butlerrec.coop



Our Commitment to Community

Each year, Butler County REC employees volunteer as a way of helping others. In 2024, 10 employees contributed 755 hours to churches, a daycare, fairs, an after-prom, the American Red Cross, a fundraiser, a concessions stand, an ambulance service, and a fire department.

Gary Doebrmann, accountant, and Lori Roose, accounting clerk, were the top volunteers. Gary, with 351 hours, and Lori, with 163 hours. Gary chose St. Jude’s Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee, and Lori chose Hope Lodge, Iowa City, to each receive a \$25 donation in their names.

Additional volunteers were Mandy Brouwer, Macy Endelman (summer intern), Anne Gardiner, John Groen, Katie LaBree, Mike Miller, Sandi Miller, and Alesha Wedeking.

Contact BCREC for information and savings on heat pumps

Looking to improve your home's comfort while saving on energy costs? With the right HVAC system and available rebates, upgrading your heating and cooling system has never been more affordable. Take advantage of these money-saving opportunities to boost efficiency, reduce your carbon footprint, and enjoy year-round comfort.

Geothermal heat pump

The most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling unit, according to the Department of Energy (DOE), a geothermal heat pump can be between 300% to 600% efficient on the coldest nights. How? By using the earth's natural heat to heat, cool, and in some instances, heat water.

With Butler County REC rebates, you can save even more money on your geo unit: \$1,000 per ton (unit must be Energy Star rated or have a minimum of EER 14.0 and COP of 3.3). You are eligible for an additional \$50 if the unit has a desuperheater. Are you replacing a geo unit? You'll receive a rebate of \$500/ton (if original unit is 10+ years old and not covered by warranty).

Air source heat pump

If you are in the market for a system that is not as costly as a geothermal heat pump but still offers a great deal of efficiency, look at an air source heat pump. Consider a mini split if you don't have ductwork to the area that needs heating or cooling. The DOE states that an air source heat pump can deliver up to 200% to 400% more heat energy than the electrical energy it consumes. An air source heat pump takes heat from the air and heats it to a higher temperature or cools it to a lower temperature rather than converting from a fuel.

Butler County REC's \$500 per ton air source heat pump rebates are for those units that are 15+ SEER/14.3 SEER 2. You are eligible for an additional \$150 per ton if you have automatic gas backup.

Contact Matt or Tyler in the energy services department at Butler County REC to discuss how a geothermal or air source system, and accompanying rebates, can benefit you.



Matt Mahoney, energy services manager



Tyler Opperman, energy services advisor



Scan for BCREC rebates

Let us make your life easier with SmartHub

What if Butler County REC offered an app for bill payment, checking usage, contacting us, and more? Guess what? We do—SmartHub! You can download the app or access SmartHub through our website at butlerrec.coop.

A few of the features offered through SmartHub include:

Dashboard: Usage overview graphs, communications and alerts, and pay button

Bill and Pay: Enroll in auto pay and view your bill, usage, and payment history

Usage: See how much electricity you typically use, compare bills, explore past and current usage, and evaluate ways to lower usage and save money

Contact us: Our address, phone numbers, and maps in one location; report a problem or send a general inquiry

Settings: Manage your billing address and contact information, set up paperless billing, manage your password, store payment accounts, and so much more.

To register, you will need an e-mail address and your account number (found on the top right of your bill). Activate the features you want, such as alerts/notifications, auto pay, and paperless billing.



Questions or issues? Contact us at 888.267.2726 or email us at butler@butlerrec.coop.

Electricity demand to climb in 2025

Consumption of electricity is expected to rise in 2025 all over the world.

A colder-than-usual winter led home and business owners to crank up the heat, moving sales of electricity up by 2% over the last year, according to the Energy Information Administration. Rising production costs and declining gas inventories have contributed to price increases.

"Current high coal and gas prices are not the result of a single shock event on the demand or supply side," according to an EIA report. "Rather, they result from a combination of supply and demand factors that gradually tightened markets over the course of several months and even years."

To keep your family's energy consumption from rising, consider purchasing an energy-efficient water heater and furnace and unplugging anything electric when you're not using it, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Contact us at 888.267.2726 for more information on how to save energy and money.

What's different about an electric cooperative?

You receive this publication because you buy your electricity from an electric cooperative. It's a utility that operates like no other.

Cooperatives are consumer-owned businesses, which means that you and your neighbors actually own your electric utility. In fact, you may have noticed that the utility refers to you as a "member" rather than as a "customer."

Cooperatives have their roots in their local communities, so they never sell stock. That way, consumer-members retain local control.

5 Tips To GO GREEN for St. Patrick's Day



1. Replace your HVAC filter.

These typically need replacing every three months, though factors like pets, climate and system age can affect the timing.

2. Install a smart thermostat.

A smart thermostat offers convenience, savings and efficiency by adjusting the temperature based on your schedule — reducing usage when no one is home.

3. Cut energy use during peak hours.

In spring, peak electricity hours are usually in the evening. Reduce usage by visiting a park, a theater or dining out.

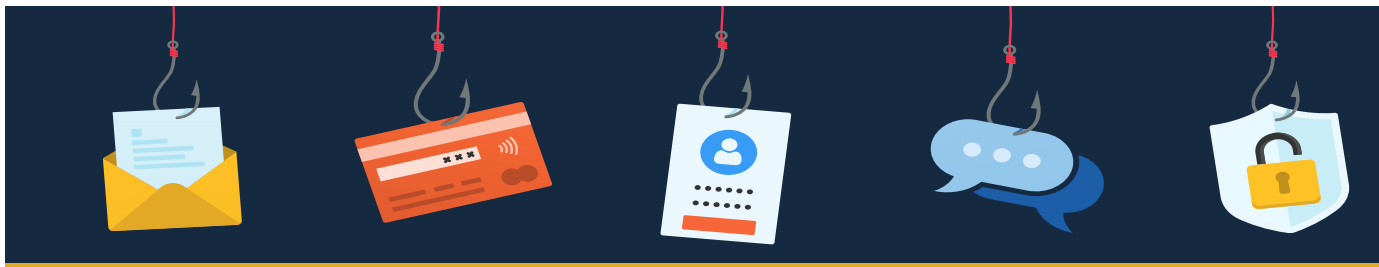
4. Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances.

Look for appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified, using 10 to 15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov.

5. Save energy through rebate programs for solar, battery storage or electric vehicles.

Check with utilities and government programs for rebates and incentives to help make these technologies more accessible.

Learn more at:



Utility scams in the age of AI: Spot and avoid fraud

Someone calls claiming to be from Butler County REC and saying your service will be cut off if you don't pay immediately. Real utility companies don't do this. But scammers want to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they're telling you. And scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to craft frauds that are difficult for consumers to detect. Learn how to protect yourself.

Beware of these common scam tactics

- Disconnection threats: Scammers claim your service will be cut off without immediate payment.
- Caller ID spoofing: Fraudsters use software to make their calls appear legitimate.
- Overpayment claims: They may say you've overpaid and ask for personal or banking information to issue a refund.
- Smishing: Scammers send fake text messages that seem to come from your utility company.
- Phishing attempts: Beware of emails that look like bills; always verify the sender's email before clicking links.

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call us at 888.267.2726.

Watch for the following red flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards, or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings, and suspicious email addresses.

AI use enhances utility scams

By leveraging AI-powered techniques, utility scammers can create sophisticated and convincing frauds that are hard for consumers to recognize and avoid.

- AI helps scammers craft convincing emails that appear to be from legitimate utility companies and include the use of company colors and logos.
- Scammers use AI to create realistic-looking utility company websites that are nearly indistinguishable from legitimate ones.
- AI technology can clone the voices of utility company representatives, making phone scams convincing.
- AI analyzes victims' online presence and social media to create highly personalized spam related to your utility services.
- Scammers create geographically targeted online ads that appear when users search for keywords related to their energy bills.
- Scammers use AI to launch large-scale utility scam campaigns quickly and efficiently.

According to Kathy Stokes, AARP director of Fraud Prevention Programs, "the ability of AI to improve and scale scam tactics is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution for fraud criminals."

Protect yourself

- Take your time: Don't rush into payments or action.
- Verify any communication by calling us directly.
- Never share personal information. Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification.
- If you suspect a scam, report it to your utility company and the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Remember, legitimate utilities will provide multiple notices before disconnection and will not pressure you for immediate payment. If you are in doubt, let us know so we can take proactive measures to protect you and others from becoming victims.

Source: SafeElectricity.org

INtouch® is published monthly for members of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative
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