

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September 2026

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



The power behind everyday life

A WORD FROM



Craig Codner, CEO
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We know that many families across our local communities are feeling the impact of rising costs for everyday expenses. Groceries, gas, insurance, and other necessities cost more than they did just a few years ago. And because of that, we understand that every household is carefully considering where each dollar goes.

That's why I think it's important to occasionally step back and consider the value electricity provides.

The average U.S. residential electric bill is about \$150 a month—roughly \$5 a day. I often think about what that \$5 provides. It's about the cost of a specialty coffee, yet electricity powers nearly every moment of our daily lives, often without us giving it a second thought. In fact, many typical purchases cost more than a day's worth of electricity. A fast-food combo meal averages about \$9, and a single movie ticket can cost around \$13.

For about \$5 a day, your refrigerator keeps food fresh around the clock. Your heating and cooling system helps keep your family comfortable through the seasons. Lights brighten your home after sunset. Appliances make cooking

and cleaning easier. Devices stay charged so you can work, learn, communicate, and stay connected with loved ones. When you think about everything electricity makes possible, it's one of the greatest values in the average household budget.

Even with electricity's exceptional value, we know every dollar matters. If you're looking for ways to lower your energy use, Butler County REC is here to help.

Whether you need efficiency advice from our energy advisors, information about co-op rebates and efficiency programs, or answers to questions about or help with your monthly bill, our team is always available.

For 90 years, Butler County REC has been proud to be more than your electric provider. Because we're a cooperative, we're locally owned by you, the members we serve. That means every decision we make is guided by what's best for our community—not by outside shareholders.

Thank you for trusting us to power your home and your life. We're committed to providing everyday value for you and your family, with reliable, affordable power—so you can make the most of every energy dollar.

A Little Cost. A Lot of Life.

For about \$150 a month, electricity powers hundreds of tasks that keep your home comfortable, connected and running smoothly—from brewing your morning coffee to keeping your family cool, safe and entertained.

- 720 hours of refrigeration
- 20+ loads of clean clothes
- 15+ home-cooked meals
- 90+ hours of lighting
- Numerous devices charged
- Hundreds of hours of cooling/heating
- Countless connections to work, school and entertainment

30 days of comfort



Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork

Our commitment to community



Butler County REC; Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Humboldt; and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck, North Dakota, recently donated \$2,000 to the Clarksville Fire Department for a new pumper truck. Their current truck is nearly 40 years old.

The department covers almost 100 square miles of rural residences and farm-related businesses, along with automatic assistance with the Shell Rock Fire Department to Butler Logistics Park, served by Butler County REC.

If you would like to donate to the new equipment, you can send your donation to Clarksville Fire Department, PO Box 367, Clarksville, Iowa, 50619. All donations are appreciated.

Pictured, left to right, are Ryan McCully, chief; Kyle Lorenz, captain; and Joel Hardy

Know the dew point

When September nights turn from crispy to comfortably crisp, your first instinct might be to fling the windows open and let that cool breeze in. It feels like free air conditioning.

But doing this without checking the humidity can backfire. If the outdoor air is damp, you are inviting hidden moisture into your home. Overnight, your walls, wood floors, and furniture will absorb that humidity like dry sponges.

The next day, as the sun warms the house, your air conditioner has to work twice as hard. An a/c unit does not just cool the air; it has to wring out all that water vapor first. Running a compressor to dehumidify your home is incredibly energy intensive.

To avoid this, use the dew point rule. Check your local weather app before opening the windows. If the dew point is 55 degrees or lower, the air is dry and comfortable. In that case, go ahead and open up after dark. If it is higher than 55, keep the windows shut.

When the dew point is low, you can practice "night flushing." Open the windows at night to pull in the dry, cool air. Then, shut everything tight early in the morning before the sun hits the walls, trapping the cool air inside and keeping the humidity out.



Tips for a safe harvest

Avoiding electrical accidents

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your utility.

If equipment contacts a power line

- Do not leave the cab, unless the equipment is on fire—jump off with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time, then keeping your feet together, hop to safety.
- Immediately call 911.
- Warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

Rest is important

- Go to bed and wake up at regular times.
- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

Webinar series offers local students opportunity to win college scholarships

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. We've also been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, leadership, and electric cooperatives with a two-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 IowaYouthTour.com.

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, advocacy, or leadership," remarked Craig Codner, Butler County REC CEO. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting career paths that are available in smaller communities and help them advocate for issues they care about."

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

- *Sunday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. - Why Cooperatives Matter and How to Effectively Advocate*
- *Sunday, October 18, 7:00 p.m. - Being a Leader*

At the end of each live session, one attendee will be selected at random to *win a \$500 scholarship*; students who attend both sessions will be entered into a bonus drawing for *a \$1,000 college scholarship*. All students who register online at IowaYouthTour.com receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a dynamic speaker. Attendees will also hear about Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The 2027 Youth Tour is slated for June 16-22 next summer.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact Anne at anne@butlerrec.coop or 888.267.2726, ext. 111, for more information.



STUDENTS:
Are you
interested
in service,
advocacy or
leadership?

Attend our webinar
series in October for
a chance to win a
college scholarship!

Learn more at
IowaYouthTour.com



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A Touchstone Energy[®]
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Storm safety tips: Prepare and stay safe

It is easy to become complacent about the weather, but severe weather claims hundreds of lives each year.

From tornadoes and floods to lightning, high winds, extreme heat and cold, severe weather can cause destruction and power outages. Sometimes people end up in dangerous situations because they think they can outrun or outsmart a storm, extreme temperatures, or other hazardous conditions. Being prepared with supplies, a plan, and safety knowledge can help protect you and your family.

Watch vs. warning

When severe weather is approaching, many people turn on the TV, check a weather app, or go online for updates, but do you know the difference between a watch and a warning?

A watch means conditions are favorable for severe weather, such as a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Stay alert, monitor conditions, and take precautionary steps, such as unplugging electronics and checking your emergency kit.

A warning means severe weather is occurring, imminent, or indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately in the safest part of the building, such as a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows.

Follow these tips to stay safe

- Install a weather app and enable severe weather alerts.
- Have an evacuation plan for hazards such as floods or wildfires.
- Establish a family communication plan, including each person's responsibilities and a meeting place in case you are separated.
- Keep emergency kits stocked and up to date. Include a first-aid kit, portable phone charger, flashlights, batteries, food, water, and enough supplies to last at least three days.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a generator.
- Use a generator only outdoors in an open area, never in a garage, carport, or other enclosed space.
- Keep portable generators at least 20 feet from doors, windows, and vents.

Know how to keep others safe

Storms can be unpredictable and can damage the power grid. Severe weather may also make utility equipment harder to access. During and after major weather events, line crews may be restoring power and making repairs.

Everyone should do their part to help keep lineworkers and utility crews safe:

- Slow down and move over in work zones.
- Do not distract crews while they work.
- Direct service questions to Butler County REC.
- Check our social media channels for outage updates, if available.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. Doing so can cause back feed, which sends electricity from your home back onto power lines.

Stay alert during cleanup

- If the power is out, stay indoors unless you must leave to remain safe.
- Be alert for downed power lines that may be hidden by ice, snow, standing water, or storm debris.
- Never approach a downed power line. Call 911, then keep others away.
- Do not trim trees or branches within 10 feet of an overhead power line.

Power outages, downed lines, and generator misuse can create serious risks during and after severe weather. To learn more, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Outsmart your home's air leaks



Looking for air leaks in your home? A handheld thermal leak detector is a cool, inexpensive gadget that uses an infrared sensor to find temperature changes.

Some models project a colored light directly onto your walls—shining blue on cold spots and red on hot spots—while others display colors on a screen.

This makes finding hidden air leaks fast and visual. On a cool September evening, turn off the interior lights and walk through your home with the detector.

Keep an eye out for the usual suspects. Point the sensor at your attic hatch, often a massive escape route for heated air. Check the electrical outlets on exterior walls and recessed lights in your ceiling.

Once you locate a draft, seal it with caulk or weatherstripping. Blocking these invisible drafts now prevents your furnace from working overtime when the true cold weather hits.

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