



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# iNtouch

March 2014



WITH MEMBERS OF BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A WORD FROM



**Craig Codner, CEO**  
ccodner@butlerrec.coop

## Take pride in and ownership of your cooperative

Watch your mail for your annual meeting invitation included in the electric bill you receive in March. The meeting will be held Sat., March 29, 2014, at the North Butler Middle School in Allison.

The theme for our meeting is “Take pride in and ownership of your cooperative,” which describes our commitment to involve members in the services and programs we offer. Your electric cooperative works hard to give value to everything it does – from keeping rates stable to promoting the safe use of electricity – and the annual meeting is one of the best times to realize the value of your cooperative membership.

In addition to electing fellow members to our board of directors to represent your best interests, you’ll have plenty of opportunities to talk with employees, directors, and your neighbors and friends.

We’ll provide everyone with a free lunch featuring barbecued pork loin prepared by Leland Boyd, director. Back by popular demand, Wichita county band will perform in the auditorium before the business meeting. We’re also planning displays with information on programs like the Co-op Connections Card, new LED security lights, and lighting rebates.

At the end of the meeting we’ll hold a drawing for electric bill credits worth \$700. One grand prize winner will receive a \$100 bill credit. Every voting member will leave with an LED work light pictured here.

Please plan on attending the annual meeting and bringing your entire family. We want you to be an active and involved member of Butler County REC.



## Annual meeting

MARCH 29, 2014

North Butler Middle School in Allison  
Doors open at 10:30 a.m.

## New LED security lights available

Butler County REC members interested in high-efficient outdoor security lights can now have light emitting diode (LED) lights installed at their farms and homes.

“Over the past few years, we’ve tested several varieties of LED security lights,” said Joe Conlon, operations manager. “We’ve been pleased with the results of the light we are now providing.”

The new security light available is a 40-watt LED Evluma, equipped with light sensory equipment for efficient dusk-till-dawn service.

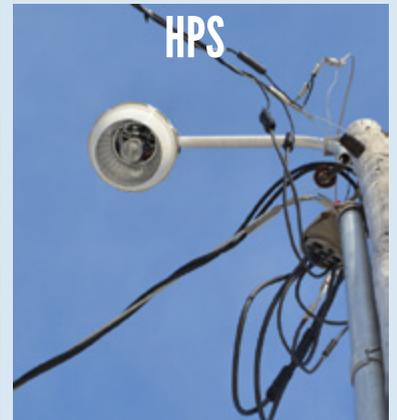
Upon request, line crews can replace a high pressure sodium (HPS) bulb and fixture with the new LED light.

## Light display at annual meeting

Get more information about the LED security light on Saturday, March 29, at our annual meeting in Allison. Both security lights we offer will be on display. You’ll be able to see and compare the lights, and staff will be on hand to answer your questions.



LED



HPS

Compare the costs	40-watt LED	100-watt HPS
Purchase and installation	\$245 after rebate*	\$90 to \$100
Life expectancy	20 years	10 years
Monthly energy cost**	\$1.67	\$4.18

\*\$30 Rebate offered for members

\*\*Based on operating 10 hours per day at \$.1393 per kWh

## Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' Welcome Back Legislative Reception held

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), in conjunction with Iowa BioTech Association, Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, Iowa Communications Alliance, and the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa hosted the annual Welcome Back Legislative Reception at the State Historical Building for state legislators on Tuesday, Jan. 14.

Nearly 100 legislators and 150 electric cooperative directors, managers, and staff were in attendance.

The annual reception is designed to allow the representatives from 34 electric cooperatives from across the state an opportunity to meet with legislators to discuss issues regarding safe, reliable, and affordable energy options for all Iowans.

In the coming months the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related items central to Iowa's rural economy. Cooperative directors, managers, and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues that allows for Iowa's member-owned RECs to continue to provide affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally responsible power.



Prior to the legislative reception, REC representatives could watch events in the Iowa State Capitol Building.



(From left) Directors from Prairie Energy Cooperative, Doyce Bringnitz and Kenneth Mersch, and (far right) Donald Christopherson, talked with (third from left) Senator Daryl Beall.



(From left), CEO from Butler County REC, Craig Codner, talks with directors from Grundy County REC, Larry Rohach, Kevin Pruisner, and Earl Slinker.

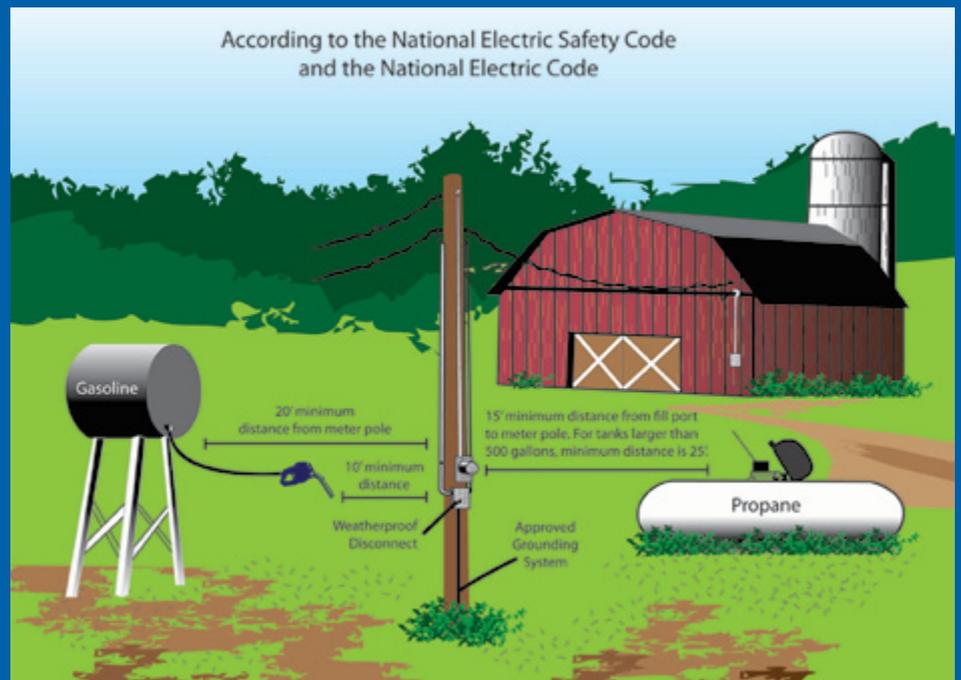
## Locate fuel tanks safe distances from meters

If you have a gasoline or liquid propane (LP) tank located on your property, you should always be concerned about its safe operation. The National Electrical Safety Code and National Electrical Code have requirements for your protection.

The image at the right shows the recommended locations for a gas or LP tank from a meter pole.

Maintaining safe distances will help to prevent fuel vapors from collecting in the conduit or electrical box. If fuses were to blow or an electrical arc to occur, a lethal explosion could result.

Contact your local electric cooperative if you have any questions or need more information.



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## Be Ready Before a Storm Strikes

Lights out? Store these items at home in case of an outage.



**Water**  
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.

**Tools**  
Flashlight and extra batteries, can opener, wind-up radio.



**Food**  
Three-day supply of non-perishable, high-energy food.

### **First Aid, Medicine**

First aid supplies, hand sanitizer, and at least a week's supply of medications for the family.



### **Documents**

Include copies of passports, birth certificates, and insurance policies.

Learn more at [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov).



Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Greet spring safely

Finally! Warmer days are coming and you can enjoy being outside. Keep these safety tips in mind when working outdoors this spring:

### Call before you dig

- Power lines are often put underground. If you plan on digging in your yard, call Iowa One Call at 811 or 1-800-292-8989 at least 48 hours before digging. It's a free phone call that will keep you, your family, and your farm safe. Online locate requests can be made at [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com).

### Look up

- Always take note of overhead power line locations when working outside. This is especially true when transporting large equipment. Assume that all overhead power lines are "live" and that contact with them can be deadly.

### Stay away

- Always consider a downed power line to be energized, and stay away from it. Call 911 or the utility immediately.

### Don't burn utility poles

- If you burn off weeds and grass in ditches and fields, keep the fire away from power lines, poles, and other utility-owned property. Never leave a fire unattended. Careless burning can destroy and weaken poles and equipment, creating serious safety hazards that are costly to repair.



Keep yourself, your tools, and your equipment at least 10 feet from overhead power lines.



Anyone operating large equipment should always be aware of power lines.



Co-op members who damage utility property may be charged for the time and material to make the repairs.

## 1970s VS 1980s

The two eras were totally different.



VS

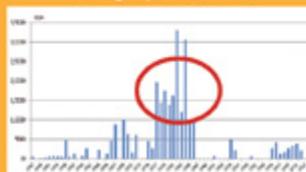


But, they had ONE thing in common.

## The Fuel Use Act

1978-1987

Do you see that big red circle in the graph below?



You see, that circle shows us the period during the 70's and 80's when the Fuel Use Act – a law banning the use of natural gas to generate electricity – was in effect.

The result – to meet growing demand for electricity, electric co-ops invested billions in coal generation plants. Since then, we've invested billions to add advanced technologies to comply with EPA regulations to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

But, now EPA wants to relieve the past and ban coal. Which leaves us wondering – where will affordable power come from in the future?

Visit [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop) for more information.

Tell the EPA to work with us on a common sense solution. Let's go forward, not backward.

Visit [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop)



## Members win prizes

Members took advantage of their cooperative membership by participating in two contests we offered over the last few months. We thank everyone who participated and are pleased to announce the following winners.

### Value of membership contest

In December 2013, we asked members to tell us in a few words why being an electric cooperative member is important to them. We received 66 responses, 27 were submitted online and 39 were returned by mail.

Congratulations to Butler County REC member Al Marth for submitted the winning entry.

Marth said, "I like being an electric co-op member because of the terrific service I receive. I can always count on great service, whether its routine maintenance or fixing an outage."

Three runner-ups received picnic blankets: Linda Peters of Plainfield, Mary Jean Parks of Nashua, and Wayne Parson of Ionia.

### \$100 of free electricity contest

Congratulations to Danny Dirksen of Ionia for winning a \$100 bill credit for completing an online member survey. His name was drawn from all surveys submitted online during the last quarter of 2013.

**Visit us online at [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop) to keep up-to-date on all our promotions and services. It's an easy way to take advantage of your cooperative membership.**



Al Marth with his iPad mini.

## Co-op members from 1995 receive dividends



Cooperative members who purchased electricity in 1995 have been paid patronage dividends for that year. The amounts were credited to members' power bills mailed in February 2014. Checks were mailed to qualifying members who no longer receive service from us. The total patronage dividend paid was \$168,690.

Butler County REC operates as a not-for-profit business, and any funds remaining after expenses are reinvested in improving services. As new funds continue to come in, the original funds can be paid back to members in the form of patronage dividends. We are currently on a 19-year payback schedule.

If you were a member in 1995 and did not receive a credit on your power bill, please contact us as soon as possible.

## Co-op Connections Cards coming soon

Butler County REC's commitment to you goes beyond providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

We're always looking for ways to provide value to our members and our community, especially during tough economic times. That's why in May 2014, we'll mail every co-op member a Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections Card.

It's a money-saving tool we're proud to offer our membership. The card connects you with discounts on everything from hotel stays to prescription drugs. You'll also receive discounts on products and services from participating local businesses.

One of the most valuable features of the Co-op Connections Card is the pharmacy discount. While it is not insurance, the discount can mean savings of 10 to 60 percent on prescription drugs. The logo and information on the back of your card will be recognized at more than 60,000 national, regional, and local pharmacies.

An advertisement for the Co-op Connections Card. It features a smiling woman in a white lab coat in the foreground. In the background, there is a blurred pharmacy setting. To the right, a Co-op Connections Card is shown, featuring the Butler County REC logo and a photo of a group of people. Large text reads "Save at all the right places!". At the bottom, a red banner says "Your Co-op Connections Card is coming to you in May 2014! &gt;&gt;&gt;".

**Learn more at [www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop) or [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop)**

**intouch**® published monthly by Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC)  
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**Our purpose: To improve quality of life for those whose lives we touch.**