

# living with energy

IN IOWA



Guthrie County REC  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

NOVEMBER 2018

Watch your mailbox for a capital credits check ▶ See Page 4

## Celebrating a cooperative milestone!

A mission to  
hire veterans

Holiday lighting  
for less

Board members  
have history with  
Guthrie County REC

Visit our website at [www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop)



## BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP

## Watch your mailbox for your capital credits check

If you were a member of Guthrie County REC in 2002, 2005 or 2017, you can expect to receive a patronage check in the mail in mid-December.

The cooperative board has approved a payout of \$1,144,932.75 for 2002, 2005 (partial) and 2017 (partial). The amount will be divided among all members who received electric service from the cooperative during those years.

How much you receive in capital credits is based on how much you paid the cooperative for electricity during the year in which the cooperative earned margins. Money is dispersed on a first-in-first-out / last-in-first-out hybrid method, which means both longtime members *and* newest members will be paid until funds are depleted.

Each year, the GCREC board of directors reviews the margins (funds in excess of expenses) from previous years and determines how much to give back. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, when GCREC makes more money than it needs for operating costs, capital improvements and cash reserves, we return that money to our members in the form of capital credits.

You might not receive a capital credit check every year since it is dependent upon the financial forecast of the cooperative and is given only if it is in the best interest of the membership.

Please call us at (888) 747-2206 if you have any questions. ⚡



## LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

## We're thankful for your membership

BY COZY NELSEN, CEO

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

In the spirit of this quote by author William Arthur Ward, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in Guthrie County REC. Because of your connection to this cooperative, we can make our community a better place.

I generally use this space to provide updates on our cooperative's priorities, progress and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you and other consumer-members of Guthrie County REC know just what an impact you have on our cooperative and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.

I am thankful that the cooperative business model encourages our role in the community as a catalyst for good. I'm grateful for the partnerships we have developed to make our communities wonderful places to live and raise a family.

I am thankful for our linemen who take time out of their day to visit local schools and provide electrical safety demonstrations. We know these students retain what they see for years, and if we're lucky, they'll pass along those safety practices to their own children one day.

I am thankful for the office staff who keep the cooperative running smoothly, answering calls from our members, and keeping the billing on track. They truly are the heart of this operation.

Because Guthrie County REC is locally governed by members of our community, I am thankful for our members who attend cooperative events, alert us to problems or

outages, and provide suggestions online or to our employees. You help us improve operations, so we can better serve the larger cooperative membership.

We are thankful that our co-op board members carve out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and stay informed of industry trends. This investment in time results in better

informed advisors who serve the co-op's interests in a way that our consumer-members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our lineworkers and other employees receive when they are working in severe weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are trying to restore power during challenging situations and prolonged periods.

Guthrie County REC is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership. ⚡



### Office

1406 State Street - P.O. Box 7  
Guthrie Center, IA 50115-0007

### Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Telephone Number

641-747-2206 or 888-747-2206  
Calls answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### Website

[www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## OFFICE CLOSING

The Guthrie County REC office will be closed Monday, Nov. 12 in observance of Veterans Day. The office will also be closed Nov. 22 for Thanksgiving.

# Come for the fellowship, stay for the prizes

BY REBECCA SCHWARTZ, COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

When I first joined the staff at Guthrie County REC a few years ago, I was surprised that the cooperative traditionally held its annual meeting in January. After all, most electric cooperatives in Iowa hold their annual meetings later in the year.

Why would our rural members want to come out on a cold winter day just after the holidays have settled down to hear reports about Guthrie County REC's business? One word: prizes.

We use our annual meeting time as more than just a report to our members on the financial health of cooperative operations. We like to use the time to meet face-to-face with those members we haven't seen all year, catch up on the latest family news and share a hot (free!) meal. When business concludes, and stomachs are full, we start giving out prizes.

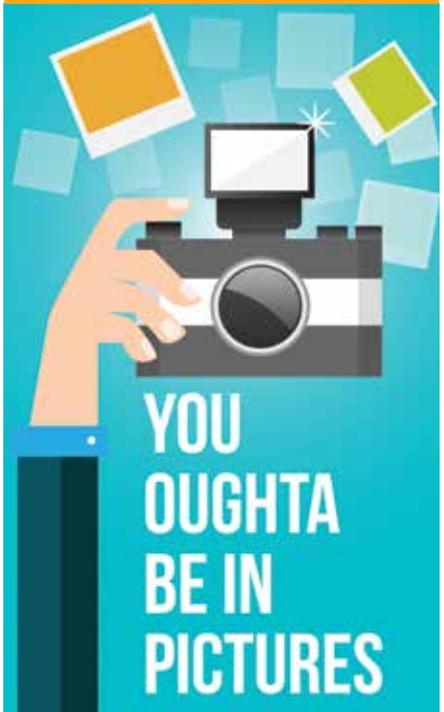
It really is the best part of the day



for us. The names of every member who attends the annual meeting are entered into a drawing. We have a table set up in the room with wrapped packages of varied sizes. When your name is drawn, you're welcome to go and pick any one package from the table. Some people pick a package based on size, some on weight and some by whether it rattles or not. It's fun to watch.

Of course, no one walks out of the annual meeting empty handed. Everyone who attends receives a registration gift as a "thank you" for attending. We also give out pens and calendars to those who want them. Then we hold a drawing for the larger prize gifts of cash or electronics. At the end of the drawing, we hold a second drawing for our grand prize, a MECO electric cart grill.

I hope you consider joining in the fun on Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019, for our 79<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. ⚡



Each month, Guthrie County REC places advertisements in local newspapers to highlight and support members of communities in our service territory. Topics include safety, our county fairs, local beef, corn and pork producers and more. These ads typically feature cooperative board members, employees or members.

Guthrie County REC is seeking volunteers from the membership to be featured in 2019. If you or someone you know fits into one of the categories below, please call us at (888) 747-2206 or email [gurecrebecca@netins.net](mailto:gurecrebecca@netins.net).

The topics are:

- Corn producers
- Commitment to Community – Do you know someone who is an outstanding volunteer?
- National Agriculture Month – A salute to all past, present and future farmers
- Call Before You Dig – A contractor or construction worker
- Beef producers
- Fourth of July / Independence Day
- Back to school
- Veterans
- Farm safety
- Pork producers ⚡



people are sent to the ER every year due to accidents that occur while holiday decorating.  
SafeElectricity.org

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win \$100 in products to winterize your home!



Here's a little incentive to finish the energy-saving outdoor projects you've been putting off: a \$100 *Living with Energy in Iowa* Energy-Saving Gift Card you can use to buy things such as caulking, weather stripping or even an airtight dryer vent from your favorite local hardware or building supply store. To enter this month's contest, go to the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) and submit the entry form by Nov. 30, 2018. ⚡

# Board members have history with cooperative

When we say, “these poles run deep,” we aren’t just talking literally about the poles that hold the wires that bring electricity to your home. Guthrie County REC has a long tradition of proud membership; it’s something we see in the faces of our own board members today.

Board members Julie Kiley and Bob Batschelet are two such members with ties to the cooperative that go back generations. Before her, Julie’s great-grandparents, grandparents and parents were served by GCREC. Her father, Keith Staker, was a GCREC board member in the 1960s and 1970s.



“I remember during his time on the board, the REC was working on creating a

stronger infrastructure, and he was also involved in the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour,” Julie said. “I went to the annual meetings with my parents and was surprised at the feeling of family and common goals.”

When the time came, Julie said she was willing to run for the board because it had been an important part of her life. Today’s board, however, is much different than the board of 40 or 50 years ago.

“The board has changed in representation, knowledge and long-range goals,” she said. “GCREC’s service area is one that remains the same as when my father was on the board, but our scope of services has drastically changed. We are dealing with technology and demands that didn’t exist when my father was on the board.”

J.E. Batschelet is a name you may see any time you enter the cooperative office. He is the grandfather of current board member Bob Batschelet and served as the corporate attorney for the cooperative when it was founded in 1938. When J.E. died in 1960, Bob’s

father, C. King Batschelet, became the corporate attorney and served in that capacity until 1987.

“Our family was brought up knowing that business was never discussed in the household because it was confidential,” Bob said. “That being said, I could tell that dad was proud to be a small part of what GCREC was accomplishing.”

When a previous director moved away from the territory, Bob asked himself, “why not me?” and decided to enter his name for consideration. “I valued what the cooperative was providing for its members but really didn’t know how much more was being done behind the scenes for the membership,” he said.

Turns out, it was a lot. “The internet is crucial to being a board member in 2018,” Bob added. “Not only are the local agenda and board packet provided electronically, but we have lots of articles to read and webinars that we can participate in. I’m not sure what comes next, but we are in an information society. What a difference a few years makes.”

Julie and Bob cite growth and changing times as both challenges and successes facing GCREC. As



new generations come onto cooperative lines, it’s important they understand not only the role of the cooperative to them, but also what it does for their community.

“Guidance from past boards and employees got us here and as times continue to evolve, we need younger generations to become more involved,” Bob said. “Thoughts and ideas from the membership are always appreciated on this or any other matter.” ⚡



Guthrie Co.  
REC Board  
Member  
John Masmar

## Honoring Our Veterans

Today and Every Day



Guthrie County REC

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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www.guthrie-rec.coop

# Braving the cold

BY SARAH HEGGEN

For some people, working outside in the elements is a dream come true. But when the temps dip below freezing, loyalty to the job is put to the test. After all, there is still work to be done, and we count on our linemen to do it.

Guthrie County REC Line Superintendent Elden Wolfe and the line crew are preparing for winter's fury. Elden says this time of year he is visually inspecting lines across the service territory and taking note of problem areas. Back at the co-op, crews are making sure the tires on all vehicles are good, repairing any tire chains that may be needed, and swapping out the fuel for winter diesel fuel.

"It's just part of our regular routine about this time of year," Elden says. "The more we can prepare now, the less time we'll need to spend on repairs later."

Journeyman Lineman Darwin

Marean said the winter months can be challenging in this line of work. Cold, snow and biting winds can be relentless against power lines, as well as the linemen entrusted to their care.

"We encourage the crew to dress for the weather, meaning plenty of layers to fight the cold," Darwin says. "We also tell them to keep extra dry clothes in their vehicles and to take breaks to warm up as needed."

In addition to the nearly 50 pounds of regular linemen gear, workers will add insulated boots, long underwear, one or two sweatshirts, heavy weight bibs and stocking caps to battle the cold. Their hands, however, must remain bare – only fire-rated, safety approved rubber gloves can be used.

"The wires themselves are no more difficult to handle," Darwin says. "But your cold hands and fingers definitely make using the tools more difficult. The required rubber gloves aren't much help."



Rural roads can be dicey when trying to get to an area during or after a snowstorm, Darwin adds. If needed, co-ops like Guthrie County REC can sometimes call on their county maintenance crews to come plow the road. Otherwise, linemen walk in to the section they're trying to get to, then wade or crawl through snow filled ditches to reach the poles.

It's all part of the job to take the heat with the cold, the beautiful days with the ugliest winter battle. Darwin's final advice to linemen working in cold temperatures? "Grow a beard," he says, smiling. ⚡

Sarah Heggen, CCC, is a communications & member relations specialist with Central Iowa Power Cooperative.

## 10 Safety Tips for Winter Power Outages

Winter weather calls for additional safety measures if a power outage occurs. Here are a few tips to follow if the power is out:

1. Call your local electric cooperative to report your outage – don't assume that your neighbor has already called it in. The outage may be isolated to your home only.
2. Be aware that in cold weather, water pipes may freeze. Drain the water supply lines if possible, but if they must remain operational, insulate the lines or allow a small flow of water to continually run through the system.
3. If you have an unvented, fuel-burning space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface – not on rugs or carpets or near bedding or drapes. Cross-ventilate by opening a window an inch on each side of the room; it's better to let some cold air in than to run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, never leave a space heater unattended or within the reach of children or pets – and turn it off when you leave the room or go to bed.
4. Keep curtains and exterior doors closed.
5. Use your fireplace if you have one. Otherwise, make sure the flue is closed.
6. Do not use your stove, oven, cooktop, outdoor grill, camping stove or any other fuel-, charcoal- or wood-burning cooking equipment to try to produce usable heat inside your home. The carbon monoxide these devices produce could be fatal within a matter of minutes.
7. Don't use candles for lighting; they can cause a fire. Use a flashlight or battery-powered camping lantern instead.
8. Do not use generators unless they are connected to an isolated circuit. Generators connected directly to a home's electric circuit may create a life-threatening situation for crews working on the line. If you are not certain that a generator is isolated, do not use it.
9. Stay away from down power lines and poles. Always assume the lines are energized and report any damage to your local electric cooperative.
10. Avoid riding snowmobiles in ditches and other areas where power lines are down. Buried conductors, downed lines and broken poles represent a significant safety issue. ⚡