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Guthrie County REC
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

FEBRUARY 2019

High school seniors: It's time to apply for 2019 Guthrie County REC scholarships ▶ See Page 12

High school students –
**win a free trip to
Washington, D.C.!**

Visit our website at www.guthrie-rec.coop

Guthrie County REC
**holds 81st Annual
Meeting**

Digital meters
go the distance

Weathering a
power outage

Exceeding our own expectations

BY COZY NELSEN, CEO

During our recent annual meeting, I shared the following information. For those who weren't able to attend, I'd also like to share it here.

You have all chosen to be involved in your cooperative and if you're here on a sunny Saturday, it means you want information. You're here on your own time because you care about Guthrie County REC — and you want to make sure I care, the Board of Directors cares and the REC employees care about it as much as you do. You want to make sure that we continue to provide the membership with safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power that will bring real, long-term solutions to our service territory. My focus today and into the future is to “exceed our own expectations.”

It means to go beyond your failures and your successes. Past accomplishments are in the past; we cannot rest on our laurels and continue to be a growing and viable cooperative. Right now, Guthrie County REC has some of the lowest



electric rates in Iowa; we have not had a distribution rate increase since 2001. Yet we have still been able to

put money toward system improvements that reduce outages and replace older electric lines and an aged transportation fleet.

I am happy to report our 2019 capital budget includes 32 miles of new-to-replace old projects, 40 new or upgrades to services, and a rotation of the cooperative vehicles.

We have set the bar high with our financials, electric rates, and patronage rotation. Believe me when I say that Guthrie County REC's financial stability and positioning is my passion. At Board meetings, we discuss our desired operating TIER of 1.20, with a responsible balance of equity, low debt, patronage, and construction work plans.

When I started working for the REC in 1993, not much of the system was automated. In the last 25 years

we've installed Automatic Meter Infrastructure (AMI) to read meters remotely. That increases Guthrie County REC's efficiency which saves us time and payroll dollars without sacrificing safety or reliability.

One item that hasn't changed during these years is the value Guthrie County REC places on its employees. No one wants to imagine themselves in a dangerous situation, but the facts show these incidents are becoming more common. Our employees received “S.A.V.E.,” specialized training from professional law enforcement, with the goal to increase the chances of survival. The Board of Directors also invested in a better security system for our office, which includes alarms, motion detectors, cameras, keyless entry and a visitor system.

I wish all of you a wonderful year. If you have any questions, suggestions, clarifications or just want to say “hello” to us, stop by or give us a call. ⚡

NOTIFY US

Contact us if you have medical equipment that requires electricity

For some who rely on life support or other essential medical equipment, a power outage can present a life-threatening situation. If you or someone you know relies on electricity to power life-sustaining equipment, please take the following steps before an outage occurs:

Contact Guthrie County REC at (888) 747-2206 to let us know you have a special health need. We will put a note on your account and, when possible, consider your



address a priority when restoring power after an outage.

Other things you can do:

- Invest in power supply backup equipment. This could be a generator or battery backup for the medical equipment. Have a qualified technician install this equipment.
- Notify family, friends and neighbors. That way, when the power goes out, they know to come to your assistance and take you to a location that has power. ⚡



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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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Another successful annual meeting in the books!

Thank you to all our cooperative members who came out on a mild Saturday afternoon to take part in Guthrie County REC's 81st Annual Meeting. The meeting was held Jan. 5 at the Lake Panorama Conference Center and was attended by 235 guests.

The election was held with all three incumbents retaining their board seats: Julie Kiley represents District 1, John Masmar represents District 2 and Keith Peterson represents District 3.

"The next few years will be very interesting as our power supplier, CIPCO, resolves issues with the early closure of Iowa's only nuclear power plant," Masmar says. "The progression of that plan will be of utmost importance to all of us members. While a lot of our monthly responsibilities are similar,

each month brings with it a new challenge or twist. Thank you for your confidence in re-electing me as a director."

All members in attendance received a lunchbox cooler and a smart plug as a thank you. The following individuals were awarded door prizes:

- **Robert Williamson:** 32" LED TV with built-in DVD player
- **Brenda Heuton:** 22-Quart Roaster Oven
- **Pat Kading:** Heated Throw Blanket
- **Dean Hick:** Ninja Coffee Bar
- **Ruth Ann Bock:** Shark Cordless Pet Hand Vacuum
- **Dana Grefe:** \$25 gift card
- **Melvin Smith:** \$50 gift card
- **Wayne Burchfield:** Meco Deluxe Electric Cart Grill 🌩



Robert Williamson



Pat Kading



Ruth Ann Bock



Dean Hick



Melvin Smith



Wayne Burchfield



Cooperative employees recognized for their years of service during the annual meeting were: Cozy Nelsen, CEO, 25 years; Larry Newbrough, journeyman lineman, 35 years; Jeremy Gruber, journeyman lineman, 15 years; Josh Oltmann, journeyman lineman, 15 years; and Marlene Chalfant, member service clerk, 20 years.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win four Wi-Fi enabled smart plugs!



Are you forever leaving the living room light on? Or maybe it's the computer. If you forget to turn off these items before you leave for work, they suck up energy the whole time you're gone. With a smart plug like Apple's iDevices Switch, you can remotely cut power to these devices and save energy. The iDevices Switch works with Siri, Alexa and the Google Assistant, allowing you to control your home with the power of your voice.

Visit the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiowa.com to enter the contest no later than Feb. 28, 2019. 🌩

STUDENT LEADERS

Apply now for 2019 scholarships

The foundation of Guthrie County REC is supporting the communities in which we live and work. Part of this commitment is offering scholarships to students.

High school seniors in the Guthrie County REC service territory who are interested in continuing their education in any field of study or power line programs are invited to apply for the 2019 scholarship.

Guthrie County REC will award three \$1,000 scholarships to students enrolled full-time at an accredited college, university or vocational/technical school, or attending power lineman school, for the 2019-2020 school year. Applicants must have a guardian or parent who is a member of Guthrie County REC.

Applications must be postmarked on or before April 5, 2019. The application must include the application form, a personal letter stating your educational goals, a statement on why you think rural electric cooperatives are important, a wallet-sized photo of the student and the most recent academic transcript. Due to the volume of applications, only students awarded a scholarship will be notified.

Visit www.guthrie-rec.coop for more information and to download the application. ⚡



SAFETY FIRST

Lesser-known tips to help weather a power outage

Wintertime invariably brings storms that may knock out the power to your home for anywhere from a few hours to a few days. Flashlights, batteries and blankets are great to have on hand. Here are a few lesser-known tips that can help you through the next outage:

- Know how to operate the manual release lever for your electric garage door opener. If you have an emergency and need your car, you won't get far unless you can get out of the garage.
- Keep your car's gas tank full, especially when expecting a severe storm. Pumps at gas stations may not work during a power outage.
- Call the co-op to report power outages and get restoration information. **DO NOT CALL 9-1-1 to report an outage or to ask when your power will be back on.**
- If a traffic light is out, treat the intersection as a four-way stop.
- Use your outdoor grill to cook food. **DO NOT** grill inside your garage. Propane and charcoal



grills generate fumes that contain carbon monoxide and can be dangerous even if the garage door is open.

- Keep cold/frozen food outside in a secure location that is safe from animals.
- Contact your doctor if you're concerned that your medications have spoiled. If you have medication that requires refrigeration, check with your pharmacist before an outage for guidance on proper storage.
- Be a good neighbor. Check on family, friends, neighbors and especially the elderly, those who live alone, those with medical conditions and those who may need additional assistance. ⚡



Your furnace might be burning money.

Compared to traditional heating and cooling systems, an efficient electric heat pump uses less energy - saving you money in the long run. Visit our Web site to see available equipment rebates and calculate how much you could save by going electric.



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SAVINGS
WITH
STAYING
POWER