

# living with energy

IN IOWA



Guthrie County REC

A Tractor Energy Cooperative

APRIL 2016

## Put some buzz

in your  
landscape  
with a  
pollinator  
garden

Win a set of 16  
solar-powered  
walkway lights!

See page 5

Co-ops  
are helping

keep the  
lights on –

2,000 miles  
away

America has  
mobilized for

energy  
efficiency

Find out how  
solar energy  
can work for you



## Student Leaders

### College scholarship applications are due April 8

Planning for college is a big step. But Guthrie County REC can help reduce some of the stress, and support the community, by offering its annual scholarship.

Past scholarship recipient Danielle Schwartz attends Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge, where she's a business major. She keeps busy with her schoolwork, as well as working as a student ambassador on campus.



"The REC scholarship helped me greatly," she said. "It went toward my housing bill and tuition. I'm very thankful I received this scholarship."

High school seniors who are interested in continuing their education in any field of study or a power line program are invited to apply for the 2016 scholarship. Applications must be postmarked on or before April 8, 2016, and winners will be posted at the Guthrie County REC offices by Friday, May 6. Due to the volume of applications, only students awarded a scholarship will be notified.

Visit [www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop) to download the application and get more information about the program. ⚡



**Guthrie County REC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



#### Office

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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)

## Co-op VIPs

### April 11 is Lineman Appreciation Day

Guthrie County REC will join electric cooperatives across the U.S. on April 11 in celebrating National Lineman Appreciation Day. This is a great time to take a moment and recognize the people who often work in challenging conditions to keep our members' lights on.

There have been many changes to the lineman's job over the years. Jim Terwilliger is the longest-serving employee at the cooperative. In 1973, he began working as an apprentice lineman for \$3.25 an hour. He worked his way up to journeyman lineman and line foreman before becoming line superintendent. Looking back, Terwilliger reflects on some of the changes he's seen firsthand.

"When I started, we had one bucket truck that the brush crew used," he said. "The rest of the linemen had to climb the poles. Today's equipment is much more mechanized, with things like remote-control digger trucks, material-handling basket trucks and trucks that are four-wheel-drive. Linemen today still work a long, hard day - but they're still able to get more done and in much safer working conditions."

Keith Hise is a journeyman lineman who's worked at the cooperative for 6 years. Since high school, he knew he wanted to "work with electricity," so he made plans to attend Powerline School at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon. After graduating, he completed his 4-year apprenticeship and took the test to become a journeyman lineman.

"Every day is different," he said. "One



minute you're building single phase, and the next you're headed out on an outage call in the middle of the night to turn someone's power back on."

Despite the difference in their length of service, Terwilliger and Hise have something in common: They both started their careers by jumping in with both feet.

"My wife and I were married Dec. 1, 1973," Terwilliger said. "On Dec. 5, we got a huge ice storm. I had to work for 2 weeks straight at 16 hours a day during storm recovery."

"In January of 2010, the Guthrie County area had a major ice storm, and that was how I got introduced to the REC," Hise added. "It was a crazy, hectic way to start a brand-new career!"

Guthrie County REC proudly recognizes all of our electric linemen for their years of service around the clock to keep the power flowing:

- Jim Terwilliger, 43 years
- Doug Downing, 32 years
- Jeremy Gruber, 13 years
- Todd Tinken, 6 years
- Josh Oltmann, 13 years
- Darwin Marean, 24 years
- Elden Wolfe, 42 years
- Curt Knapp, 25 years
- Jalen Spack, 15 years
- Keith Hise, 6 years
- Larry Newbrough, 33 years
- Brian Marso, 10 years ⚡

# Here's why electric co-ops replace utility poles

BY JIM TERWILLIGER

You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles found throughout Guthrie County REC's service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network?



Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the thousands of poles supporting our lines. Throughout the year, our crews check them for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which ones are oldest and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement. When possible, Guthrie County REC will communicate when and where pole replacements will take place, so

you're informed about where crews will be working.

Here's a quick breakdown of how crews replace a utility pole:

- When a pole needs to be replaced, crews start the process by digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be 15 percent of the new pole's height.
- Next, the new pole must be fitted with bolts, cross arms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces – all of the necessary parts for delivering safe and reliable electricity.
- Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole.
- The new pole is then raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.

So, the next time you come across a Guthrie County REC crew replacing a pole, use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, our members. ⚡

Jim Terwilliger is the line superintendent for Guthrie County REC.

# Here's how to spot energy myths and scams



A quick Internet search can reveal many ways to save energy around your home, but unfortunately a lot of them are too good to be true. Scams generally misstate science or cause confusion over utility programs. That's why it's always a good idea to call your electric co-op to verify or ask questions about any energy-saving program you see advertised.

Here are some questions you should ask a sales representative before you buy:

1. **Does the product violate the laws of science?** Does it claim to be capable of "changing the molecular structure," for example? If yes, then ask yourself, "Why isn't this product being sold in every store across the nation?"
2. **Was the product tested by an independent group?** Don't allow the salesperson to verify claims. If the performance of the product wasn't tested and certified by a lab or entity *not* connected to the company selling it, be skeptical.
3. **Is it too good to be true?** If so, it probably is.

"We urge our members to question sales tactics if they feel unsure of a company's claim," said Guthrie County REC general manager Cozy Nelsen. "Any upstanding company will have no problem instilling confidence in their product. And if you're just not sure about the facts, please call the cooperative and we can help." ⚡

## Editor's Choice Contest

# Win a set of 16 solar-powered walkway lights!

Safely light a sidewalk or spotlight your garden up to 8 hours at night with these Patriot Riesel Solar Path Lights. The lights have a stainless steel finish and cut glass shade and include a bright-white LED and AA rechargeable battery inside. You can find more information at [www.menards.com](http://www.menards.com); enter 3431339 in the Search box at the top of the page.

Also included is a Westinghouse Bug Zapper LED Solar Path Light that offers a natural amber light – or, with the flip of a switch, provides a purple UV light to eliminate pesky, non-beneficial insects within 400 feet.

To enter the contest, go to the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) by April 30, 2016. ⚡



# Chalfant attends Momentum is Building conference



Guthrie County REC member service clerk Marlene Chalfant (*above, center*) joined others from Iowa's local electric cooperatives in February for the "Momentum is Building" conference in West Des Moines. Support for the conference comes from Iowa's electric cooperatives, along with sponsorship by the Iowa Energy Center.

The annual event offers up-to-date building science information, practical hands-on information and new technology displays for building trades professionals, including home builders; electricians; and heating, cooling and plumbing contractors. Attendees from local service areas were able to find out what's new in the industry – techniques as well as products – and to hear from experts about what's happening across Iowa and around the country.

Nationally recognized speakers shared their knowledge on topics including the future of home building (including a look at energy efficiency, installation techniques and building products), electric and mechanical/plumbing code updates, home automation, safety and more. Participants also had plenty of time to network with their fellow professionals. ⚡



# Guthrie County REC directors approve 2016 budget

At the end of each calendar year, Guthrie County REC begins its annual budgeting process. Cooperative staff and management work together to develop a schedule for the upcoming year, with final approval required from the Guthrie County REC Board of Directors. This extensive process takes at least 2 months to finalize, but it's an essential function in any well-run business to control costs and provide fiscally responsible power to our members.

At its January meeting, the Board of Directors approved the 2016 Annual Operating Budget for Guthrie County REC. The \$14.9 million budget keeps your cooperative operating in line with its mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable power to you, our member-owners.

The budget includes \$1.8 million earmarked for the Construction Work Plan. A portion of this money will be used for the conversion of 22.7 miles

of line. Funding will also be used to perform upgrades, such as pole replacements, and extensions to new members and businesses. Each of these services is essential to providing a reliable source of electricity to our members.

As a distribution cooperative, Guthrie County REC purchases electricity from our power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative. This is our single biggest expense each year – about 72 percent of our annual revenue. The rates at which we purchase power have remained stable, allowing us the ability to prepare and plan well in advance what those costs will be.

The annual budget is a big responsibility that your cooperative takes very seriously. We work hard to anticipate, and mitigate, any potential issues that could escalate the costs of energy. Whenever and wherever possible, you can be assured that we work to minimize the impact those issues might have on your monthly electric bill. ⚡



Larry Newbrough  
Journeyman Lineman



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