

living with energy

IN IOWA



Guthrie County REC

A Trillium Energy Cooperative

MARCH 2016

Design a landscape

that's interesting all year long

It's easy being green:

St. Patrick's Day recipes

Electricity is the best choice for cost-savings and the environment

Win a water-saving showerhead radio

High school students still have time to win a trip to Washington, D.C.!

See page 13

How Your Co-op Works

Are you ready for the new realm of “smart?”

Smart appliances, cars, homes and more are becoming a bigger part of our everyday lives. While these things utilize modern communications technology to make functions faster, cheaper and more efficient, many people are turned away by their prices.



As smart technology is refined and the purchase prices better align with the average homeowner’s budget, experts predict these new technologies will deliver major benefits in energy efficiency, convenience and maintenance.

How about scheduling your laundry to run during off-peak rate hours to save a little money and stress on the grid? And if you don’t happen to be home and want to see how much time is left on your wash or dry cycle, there’s an app for that.

From Guthrie County REC’s viewpoint, smart appliances present an opportunity to manage energy load and energy efficiency more discretely and effectively to give our members the highest possible quality of service at the lowest possible price. ⚡



Guthrie County REC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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

In the Community

Century barn serves 21st century purpose

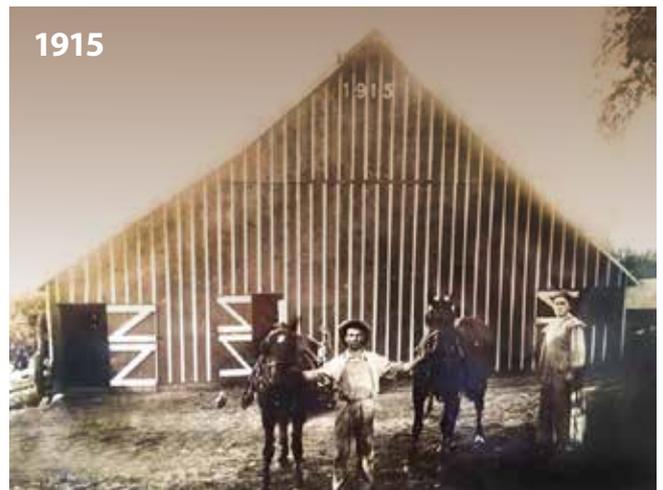
The seventh generation of a rural Adair family has repurposed a nearly 102-year-old barn on the family farm into an event venue for weddings and special occasions.

Jacob Wedemeyer settled the homestead nearly 150 years ago, and the barn was built on the property in 1915 by third-generation owners Bertha (Wedemeyer) and Otto Schafer (*bottom photo*). Its purpose over the years has included housing livestock, storage and entertainment. In the mid-1990s, ownership transferred to the current owners and

descendants, Tim and Susan Schafer. While raising their four children on the farm, the couple planned to one day renovate the barn to support a small hobby farm.

Several years later and in the midst of the renovation last winter, two of the Schafer children became engaged and expressed their hopes to use the historic barn as the backdrop for their vows. The opportunity kicked the renovation into high gear, and as barns became a popular choice for weddings, word soon spread about the Schafer barn as an event venue.

With the help of Guthrie County REC, the Schafer family has upgraded the electrical service to the home to include underground service to each of the buildings on the property, with an ample supply for future electric



heat and air-conditioning options that would modernize the barn for today’s needs.

“Our local electrical co-op has been super accommodating, as well as insightful, when trying to plan out necessary upgrades,” Susan Schafer said. “This past year, they helped us relocate our incoming line of service and to add a few more yard lights for nighttime enjoyment of the property. They have provided us with additional capacity service, as well as multiple meter loops, so that the home and out-buildings could benefit from reduced rates for electrical heat options.”

For more information on Schafer Century Barn or bookings, visit www.schafercenturybarn.com or find it on Facebook as “Schafer Century Barn – Venue.” ⚡

Crack the case of high electric bills

Fluctuations in your monthly electric bill are normal, and with heating and cooling costs making up the bulk of the expense, it's no surprise the weather outside typically determines the size of your bill each month.

But if your bill seems a bit out of the norm even for you, a quick investigation could uncover why. Start by answering these questions:

- Have you bought any new electronics or appliances that draw additional power?
- Do you have any old appliances still in use that might be going bad?
- Do you have seasonal items running, such as a dehumidifier, humidifier or space heater? Milk house heaters, for instance, can increase your electric bill by \$100 or more in a single month.
- Do you have a well? If so, check to see if the pump is running non-stop due to a possible water leak.



- Did you leave a light on while you're away for an extended period?
- If you have geothermal, is your thermostat set to "Emergency Heat"?

You can also visit www.guthrie-rec.coop and check your electric use with SmartHub. (It's also used for online bill payment.) This way, you can catch any spikes before they come as a surprise in your next bill.

If you still have questions, feel free to call the cooperative at 888-747-2206 and we'll be happy to help. ⚡

State law requires notification of alternate energy production

In 2012, the Iowa Legislature approved a bill that requires notification to electric utilities prior to installing an alternate energy source. The notification requirement applies to any type of electric generating technology including:



- Solar
- Wind turbine
- Waste management
- Resource recovery
- Refuse-derived fuel
- Agricultural crops or residue
- Wood-burning facility that will be connected to an electric transmission or distribution line

Under this legislation, the owner of an alternate energy production facility must provide written notification to his or her electric utility at least 30 days before construction or installation of the alternate energy source.

If you're considering installing an alternate energy system, please contact Guthrie County REC at 888-747-2206. Let us provide information and assistance before you decide to purchase any type of alternate energy system that requires interconnection with the electric grid. ⚡

Co-op VIP

Scholarship recipient makes most of college opportunities



Many students enter their first year of college unsure of what they want to do for the rest of their lives, so they try a little bit of everything before settling on a profession. But Kelsey Nourse, a Guthrie County REC scholarship recipient from last year, knew right away that her interest was in elementary education.

"I love working with kids, and I feel this is the right profession for me," Nourse said.

She attends Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, Mo., where she keeps busy with her sorority, Alpha Sigma Alpha. With an emphasis on giving back to the community, the sorority has provided Nourse a chance to volunteer with Special Olympics and other non-

profit groups. She added that the scholarship helped her be able to focus on her studies and charitable activities.

"I am very thankful that I got the opportunity to apply for this beneficial scholarship," she said.

High school seniors 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.** Winners will be posted at 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 to download the application and more details. ⚡

Editor's Choice Contest

Win a water-saving showerhead radio!

The Moxie showerhead from Kohler lets you stream your favorite music, news or talk radio into the shower with you. A portable speaker securely docks into the full-coverage showerhead and pops out for recharging. Prices start around \$200; get more details at www.us.kohler.com/us.



Go to the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com by March 31, 2016. ⚡

In the Community

Show you care with RECare

Guthrie County REC is proud to serve our community by extending a helping hand to those in need and encouraging others to do the same. It's one reason RECare was established.

RECare is a program through which Guthrie County REC members can help their fellow members with electric bills and weatherization efficiency costs. Members may donate funds on a one-time or monthly basis for distribution by local community action agencies to low-income members. ⚡



YES, I want to be a part of members helping others and contribute to RECare.

I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.

I will contribute \$_____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill.

I will have my monthly electric bill rounded. I understand this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill and round it up to the next highest dollar. For example, if your bill were \$154.85, then we would bill you \$155.00 and donate 15 cents to RECare. By the same token, if your bill were \$154.01, we would bill you \$155.00 and donate 99 cents to RECare.

Name _____

Guthrie County REC Acct. No. _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Signature _____

Date _____

ABCs of Electricity

We're transforming power to reach our members

When you see the word *transformer*, do you automatically think of the science fiction film of the same name? In actuality, Guthrie County REC has a system of transformers – those round gray things up near the top of power poles – that are used to step down electricity to a voltage that's safe for use in homes and businesses.

It's time for a little Electric System 101. Electricity loses voltage as it's transmitted over long distances, due to the resistance in wires and other components. To offset these *line losses*, the power generated at the power plant is at a very high voltage – 350,000 to 500,000 volts. This is necessary for the electricity to survive the trip over the system and get to where it's needed.

According to Guthrie County REC line superintendent Jim Terwilliger, the transformers you see on the poles have two sides. In normal operation,

electricity flows into the transformer on the high-voltage side, where it goes through a series of coils and induces a lower voltage in another coil on the low-voltage side.

"This transformation then allows the electricity to continue on down the line and into your home at a safe voltage," said Terwilliger.

It's important to note that transformers work in both directions. Electricity flowing in on the low side also can be stepped up to the voltage of the high side. This is why Guthrie County REC educates

members on properly connecting home generators. A generator feeding 220 volts into a residential transformer will produce whatever voltage the transformer is rated for, creating a deadly risk for our line crews and your neighbors. So, please – connect your generator according to the manufacturer's recommendations or call your local electrician to install the generator for you. ⚡



Growing the Next Generation of Farmers



March 15, 2016



Journeyman Lineman Darwin Marean and son Buck.



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