

living with energy

IN IOWA

MAY 2016



Guthrie County REC
A Tractor Energy Cooperative

Evaluate

solar energy

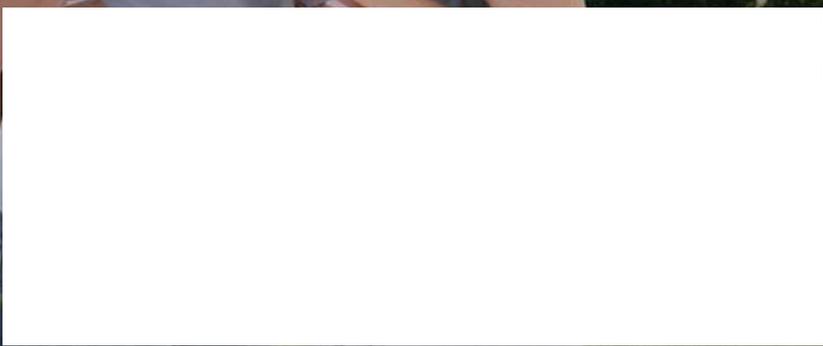
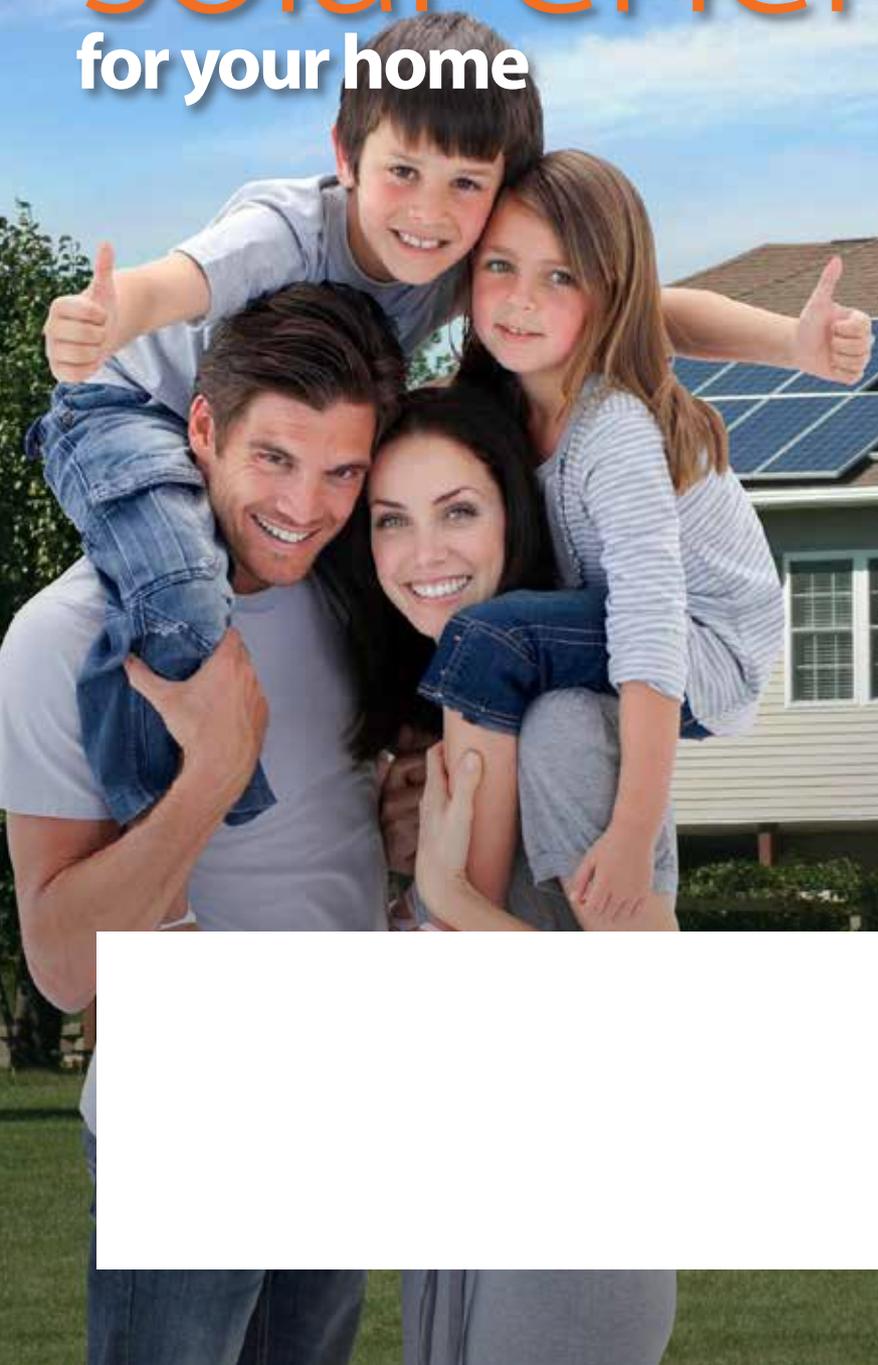
for your home

May is National
Electrical Safety
Month!

Check your home
for electrical
safety hazards

Five lucky
members
will win
a weather
radio!

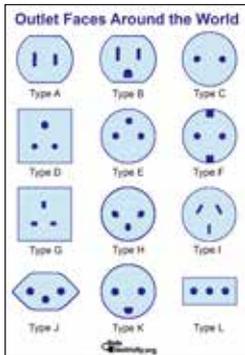
Meet this year's
Youth Tour
Contest winner



About Energy

Don't let power problems ruin your vacation

If you're planning an overseas vacation, it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the differences in electrical systems outside our borders.



There's no universal standard for electrical voltage, with variations from 110 to 240 volts and 50 to 60 hertz common around the world.

In the U.S., most modern outlets are designed for three-pronged devices, but this isn't the case in many other countries. You can buy a plug adapter at most hardware stores, but if it doesn't fit a foreign socket easily, don't use the device. And remember that plug adapters don't convert the voltage – only the plug style – so make sure your gadgets are the correct voltage for the socket, or use a converter.

For more information on electrical safety, please visit SafeElectricity.org.



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

Local Perspective

Safety is our responsibility

BY COZY NELSEN

We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect those we care about. In the spirit of May being National Electrical Safety Month, let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety at the co-op.

Up until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, when the number of "lost time" accidents was increasing. Lost time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work; these accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the ultimate tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures Guthrie County REC and many other electric co-ops nationwide, initiated the "Culture of Safety" campaign. It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

In developing the campaign, Federated brought together co-op managers, operations supervisors, safety directors and electric linemen to identify differences in perceptions regarding

safety. These discussions focused on raising awareness and improving local safety cultures. The result is the "Speak Up, Listen Up" program that empowers anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to *speak up* and encourages everyone to *listen up* with their concerns. Since implementation of the program, co-op accidents have declined more than 30 percent.



Guthrie County REC holds monthly safety meetings, during which our linemen, operations and even office staff participate in drills, demonstrations and discussion of real-life incidents.

The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

Guthrie County REC looks forward to being your **safe** electricity provider and energy advisor long into the future.

Cozy Nelsen is the executive vice president and general manager of Guthrie County REC.

Consumer Protection

Questions or complaints? Tell us!

Guthrie County REC strives to provide you with the best service at the lowest possible cost. But sometimes you have questions regarding your electrical service or billing – or possibly a complaint. If you have a complaint about Guthrie County REC's service or

concerns about its bills, you can reach a representative of the cooperative by contacting us during normal business



hours: 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, at 641-747-2206 or 888-747-2206.

You can also write to Guthrie County REC, 1406 State St., P.O. Box 7, Guthrie Center, IA 50115-0007.

If your complaint isn't resolved, you may ask for help from the Iowa Utilities Board, Customer

Service, 1375 E. Court Ave., Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; 877-565-4450; or customer@iub.iowa.gov.

Legislative Action

Iowa's electric co-ops advocate for their members



More than 200 electric cooperative employees and directors, representing more than 25 Iowa co-ops, traveled to the Iowa State Capitol in March to meet with their elected officials during their annual “REC Day on the Hill” event. The co-op group educated legislators about four issues important to Iowa’s electric cooperatives: utility-owned solar, a

skilled workforce in the state, line personnel safety and rural economic development.

Many electric cooperatives also presented booth displays that provided information on topics including community solar generation, rural broadband, load management, storm recovery, lineman equipment costs and energy efficiency. ⚡

Saving Energy

Use spring-cleaning as an excuse to pull the plug

They don’t call it “spring-cleaning” for nothing. Now is the best time to go through your home and freshen it by throwing out the old, especially if you have a few rusty appliances still sitting around.

If you have an old – but still operational – refrigerator, freezer or air conditioner that you want to get rid of, Guthrie County REC has a program available that will haul them away *and* pay you for them.

Guthrie County REC works with Conservation Services Group (CSG) to reward members for removing and recycling inefficient refrigerators, freezers and window air conditioners that are operational. The incentives are:

- Refrigerator: \$35
- Freezer: \$25
- Window Air Conditioner: \$25

There’s a limit of three operational appliances per member address.

All you need to do is contact Guth-



Unloading your second fridge can help you stock up on groceries. Kick it to the curb for good, and call Guthrie County REC at 888-747-2206 for recycling and incentive information.

rie County REC at 888-727-2206 and request collection of your operable appliance(s). CSG will then contact you to schedule the pickup. You’ll receive the incentive check after collection. ⚡

Editor's Choice Contest

Five lucky members will win a weather radio this month!

Stay aware of the weather when you’re on the go this summer with the La Crosse Handheld AM-FM/NOAA Weather Band Alert Radio. You could be one of five lucky winners this month! To enter the contest, go to the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com by May 31, 2016. ⚡



Safety Matters

Check these tips for safety on the water

Don’t let summer fun turn into tragedy – know the importance of electrical safety near boats, docks and marinas. Visit esfi.org for tips to protect yourself and your loved ones from the risk of electric shock drowning and common boat electrical hazards. ⚡



Office Closing

The Guthrie County REC office will be closed Monday, May 30, for Memorial Day.

“It’s not the heat, it’s the humidity!”

During an Iowa summer, most of the energy used to make your home feel comfortable is spent on cooling and



dehumidifying. In humid areas like ours, moisture reduction is nearly as important as lowering the indoor air temperature. If your home has too much moisture, indoor air quality can be compromised and mold and mildew problems can develop.

“Humidity is good for certain things like growing Iowa’s famous corn, but it can be a real detriment to your energy bill if moisture levels get too high in your home,” said Cozy Nelsen, Guthrie County REC general manager. “Luckily, we can help you pinpoint where simple changes can be made to reduce those expenses and enjoy a more comfortable summer season.”

Good insulation and a protective seal aren’t just to keep the cold air out during winter; they’re also to keep the cool air in during summer. Leaky ducts, windows and doors can cause energy loss, making the heating and cooling system work much harder to wring the moisture out of the air. Homes that are “sealed tight” are easier to keep cool and dry.

Other steps to help reduce the humidity inside include:

- Make sure the range hood over your stove is vented to the outside.
- Run the vent fan when bathing or showering, and keep it on up to 30 minutes after you finish in order to eliminate the residual moisture in the air.
- Check gutters and downspouts for leaks or blockages. If the ground around your home’s foundation is saturated, some of that moisture may eventually migrate inside.

If you’d like more information about saving energy, please call Guthrie County REC at 888-747-2206. ⚡

Take a break from technology

Technology is an ever-increasing part of our lives. From smart phones to smart homes, it’s difficult to disconnect for any amount of time. As our lives are increasingly congested, the reliance on technology grows.

Have you ever read an e-mail, work document or even a page in a book and then can’t remember what you read a few minutes later? This is a possible symptom of device dependence. While many of us move from one technology-based task to another, we’re not giving our brains time to recoup. Research has shown that using the time between tasks to rest your brain can enhance cognitive abilities. Device dependency is potentially detrimental to mental development and can place a strain on family relationships as well.

While advances in technology have made our lives much easier, they’ve also created some concerns in regard to overall health. Dependency on these devices keeps people from experiencing life away from the screen.

Guthrie County REC encourages you and your family to keep device dependency at bay by following a few simple tips:



- Set up gadget-free zones throughout the house. The dinner table is an obvious one, but identify other areas in the home as well.
- When spending time with friends and family, put your device in another room so you’re not tempted to check it if there’s a lull in conversation or activity.
- Eliminate, rather than streamline, when possible. For instance, unsubscribe from newsletters or turn off push notifications.
- Go green. Choose outdoor activities over technology, even for 15 minutes a day.
- Create a “Don’t do” list – and don’t check e-mails before 10 a.m.
- Institute family game night to encourage teenagers to disengage from technology.

It’s important that everyone take time to unplug and give their minds a break. By doing so, you may even save on your electric bill. For information on reducing electricity costs or utilizing energy efficiency programs, visit www.guthrie-rec.coop or call our office at 888-747-2206. ⚡

Guthrie County REC Celebrates National Beef Month in May

*Hunter Kress,
son of GCREC
employee
Dea Kress*



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