



# Current News

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A monthly publication for the members of Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative

## New Board officers elected following Annual Meeting



Following the 90th Eastern Iowa REC Annual Meeting Sept. 4, the board met in a re-organizational session and elected the five board officers. All directors elected at the 2025 District Meetings began their terms of office at the Annual Meeting: Kurt Olson, District 1; Allan Duffe, District 2; Henry Bentley, District 3; Tom Hotz, District 4; and Kathrine Wunderlich, District 5. The officers and current board include, front from left: Director Gary Kester, Secretary Michael Bixler, Treasurer Henry Bentley, President Ken Purdy, Vice President Kurt Olson, Assistant Secretary Bradley Weiss, Director Kathrine Wunderlich. Back from left: Directors Aubrey "Lee" Cartwright, Allan Duffe, Robert Schneider Jr., Joel Carstensen, Denise Timmerman, Gary Bruns, Tom Hotz, and Mike Shuger.

## Director nomination process starts Jan. 2

Each summer elections are held for positions on the Eastern Iowa REC board of directors during the District Meetings. For anyone interested in running for a position on the board, the director nomination process starts next month.

Potential director candidates are asked to submit an address verification form. This enables the Cooperative to ensure a potential candidate is eligible to run within the district they indicate on the form.

Information about the district boundary map, qualifications to seek election, director compensation, director duties, responsibilities, Standards of Conduct and characteristics of a director can be found on the Eastern Iowa REC website, **More NOMINATIONS see page 2.**

Happy Holidays from your friends at Eastern Iowa REC!



## Payment kiosks are available at all service centers

Eastern Iowa REC members who are making bill payments at Cooperative service centers can use the payment kiosks located in the vestibules at each service center.

The kiosks allow members to pay their bills using a check, cash, debit card or credit card.

Payments made through the kiosks are automatically processed into the Cooperative's billing system. These kiosks are available daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

It is important to have your account number available when using the payment kiosks. Member account numbers can be found on the upper right side of your energy bill.

The installation of these kiosks is part of an effort to continue to provide excellent service to Cooperative members,

**More KIOSKS see page 2.**

# Director nomination material available Jan. 2

## NOMINATIONS from page 1.

www.easterniowa.com/my-cooperative#resources or call 1-855-938-3616 to request the information.

Potential candidates should return a petition signed by at least 15 members of their district to the Cooperative by April 1.

All candidates submitting qualifying petitions will be asked to fill out a brief biographical form and return it to the Cooperative by May 15. This information will be used for the candidate profiles which will be published prior to the elections. All profiles will be published verbatim, as submitted.

The nomination process puts no limit on the number of candidates in a given district.

To serve on the board:

- A candidate must hold an active membership and be a bonafide resident in the district he or she is to represent.
- A candidate cannot be in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily

## Payment kiosks are available

### KIOSKS from page 1.

while taking advantage of more efficient processes to accomplish this.

Cooperative members who choose to mail their bill payments should send them to Eastern Iowa REC, PO Box 3003, Wilton, IA 52778.



engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative.

- No close relative of a candidate, as defined by board policy, can be employed by the Cooperative.

This nomination process in no way screens or filters potential candidates for seats on the Cooperative's board. Anyone who successfully completes the nomination papers and meets the qualifications as described will be placed on the ballot.

All candidates should note the time requirements of a director are more than the 12 monthly meetings. Directors should be prepared to devote an average of 25-30 days to Cooperative busi-

ness-related activities each year.

At this time, one board seat is up for election in each of the five Cooperative districts. The elections will be held during the 2026 district meetings.

The incumbent directors whose terms expire in 2026 are: Joel Carstensen, Charlotte, District 1; Mike Bixler, Clarence, District 2; Mike Shuger, Wilton, District 3; Robert Schneider Jr., Riverside, District 4; and Bradley Weiss, Burlington, District 5.

Director nomination packets will be available Jan. 2, 2026 online at www.easterniowa.com. Look under the My Cooperative tab and select Director Elections or call 855-938-3616 to request a packet.

## Infrastructure Costs

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry—pushed by a soaring demand for electricity, supply chain challenges, materials shortages and increased labor costs. The impact: increasing costs for producing power and longer, more unpredictable project timelines.

We understand the cost for essentially everything is rising, and that puts a strain on everyone. As Eastern Iowa REC navigates rising industry costs, we are actively exploring ways to control costs for our members. **Percent increase since 2020:**

### Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood)	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper)	+30-50%
Transformers	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel	+80-100%
Oil/dielectric fluids	+25-40%
Copper wiring	+50%
Concrete	+25-35%
Smart meters	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers	+20-35%

### Build-outs

Utility construction labor	+20-40%
Freight/logistics	+30-60%

### Broadband

Fiber-optic cable	+25-40%
Splicing & telecom gear	+20-30%

### Generation

Diesel gensets	+20-40%
Gas turbines	+20-30%
Solar PV systems	+25-35%
Wind turbines	+25-35%
Hydropower components	+20-30%
Battery storage	+25-40%
SCADA/EMS systems	+20-30%
Inverters	+20-30%
Relays & switchgear	+25-40%
Natural Gas	+20-120%
Coal	+30-60%
Diesel/fuel oil	+40-70%

### Fleets

Light trucks	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel)	+20-30%
Maintenance	+15-25%
Insurance premiums	+20%

Sources: BLS; energynews.com; Reuters; Wood Mackenzie; NREL; IEA



# Safe and efficient use of electric heating devices

## Here are some practical gadgets for an energy-efficient holiday season

As energy costs fluctuate and technology continues to improve, smart home devices and energy-efficient gadgets have become excellent ways to combine convenience, comfort, and conservation. One of the most effective tools is a smart thermostat. These devices automatically adjust temperatures based on your schedule and preferences, helping maintain comfort while reducing unnecessary heating and cooling costs by 10% or more annually.

Another easy addition is a smart power strip or smart plugs, designed to eliminate “phantom energy”, or the electricity consumed by devices even when they are turned off. These tools can be programmed or controlled remotely via smartphone, allowing you to manage appliances, entertainment systems, or lighting from anywhere. It’s a simple, low-cost upgrade that can make a noticeable difference on your electric bill.

Portable solar chargers or power banks are also great energy-conscious stocking stuffers, especially for those who love the outdoors or travel frequently. These compact devices use sunlight to recharge phones, tablets, or small electronics, reducing dependence on wall outlets and providing clean, renewable energy anywhere the day takes you.

Induction cooktops or single-burner induction plates are an excellent choice for those who want to cook efficiently this holiday season. Unlike traditional electric or gas burners, induction models use electromagnetic energy to heat cookware directly, wasting less energy and cooking food faster with precise temperature control.

They convert roughly 85–90% of energy into heat, compared to about 70% for standard electric and 40% for gas, making them one of the most efficient cooking options available. Portable single-burner versions are compact, affordable, and ideal for small kitchens, dorms, or RVs.

For those looking to better understand their household energy use, smart home energy monitors are an innovative option. Devices like Emporia or Sense connect to your home’s electrical panel and track real-time power consumption.

They can identify which appliances draw the most energy, detect unusual usage patterns, and help homeowners make informed decisions about saving electricity.

Practical, energy-saving gadgets can make meaningful gifts that continue giving throughout the year by reducing energy waste, saving money, and supporting sustainable living.

When temperatures drop, supplemental electric heating devices can provide comfort and protection from winter’s cold, but using them efficiently and safely is key to keeping your energy costs in check.

Space heaters are helpful for adding warmth to a single room, but they should be used wisely. Choose models certified by a recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL, and look for safety features such as automatic shut-off if the heater tips over or overheats.

Always plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet and never an extension cord or power strip. Lastly, be sure to keep them at least three feet away from flammable materials. For efficiency, only heat the room you are using and lower your main thermostat to reduce overall energy use.

Electric fireplaces offer both a comforting ambiance and supplemental heat, making them a great option for living areas and family rooms. However, like space heaters, they are most efficient when used to warm specific spaces rather than the whole home. Be sure to choose a model with an adjustable thermostat and energy-saving modes, and turn the unit off when not in use. Many units also provide flame effects that operate independently of the heating element, allowing you to enjoy the cozy look without additional energy consumption.

Baseboard heaters are another common source of electric heat, especially in bedrooms, basements, and additions. To maximize the efficiency of these units, keep furniture, curtains, and other objects clear of the unit so warm air can circulate freely. Regularly clean dust and debris from the fins, and consider adding programmable thermostats to control temperatures more precisely. Use baseboard heaters to warm only the rooms that you occupy to avoid unnecessary energy use throughout the home.

For homes with geothermal or air-source heat pumps, remember that auxiliary or emergency electric heat should operate only when absolutely necessary. Regular maintenance, proper insulation, and moderate thermostat settings can reduce the need for backup heating and help your system run at peak efficiency.

By combining smart energy habits with safe operation, you can stay warm, protect your home, and keep your electric use under control all winter long.

### BRIGHT IDEAS FOR HOLIDAY LIGHTING

If your holiday lights are still using those classic incandescent bulbs, it might be time for an upgrade. LED lights use up to 80–90% less energy and last about 25 times longer. That means lower electric bills, fewer replacements, and less time spent on the ladder.

LEDs also stay cool to the touch, making them safer around kids, pets, and dry trees. Plus, you can find them in all the same festive colors and styles— even twinkling and programmable options.

MAX’S TIP:

When setting up outdoor lights and decorations, always use extension cords rated for outdoor use. Indoor cords aren’t built to handle moisture or temperature changes and can pose serious safety hazards.

-Max

STAY MERRY, STAY EFFICIENT, & HAVE A SAFE, ENERGY-SMART HOLIDAY SEASON!

## Comments from the CEO

# Cooperative is community-focused

As the holiday season approaches, we're reminded that this truly is the season of giving. It's a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another—and at Eastern Iowa REC, that's something we take to heart year-round.

You've probably heard us talk about our concern for community. It's not just a nice phrase—it's one of the core principles that makes electric cooperatives like ours different from other utilities. We're not just here to keep the lights on (though of course, we're always working hard to do that). We're here to make life better for the people we serve—our members, our neighbors and our friends.

Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our co-op family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, to keep our community strong and to build something better for the future. That spirit of generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season.

We're proud to support local students through the Youth Tour program, where we send some of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., to see democracy in action and dream big about their futures. That's giving in the most meaningful way—by investing in tomorrow's leaders.

Another Cooperative investment in tomorrow's leaders are the STEAM Grant and scholarship programs. STEAM Grants provide \$500 for local teachers to supple-

ment their curriculum efforts in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. The Cooperative also awards 26 \$2,500 scholarships each year to students planning to attend four-year colleges or trade schools.

And because we care deeply about safety, we also spend time visiting schools throughout the communities we serve, holding demonstrations and teaching folks of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We believe knowledge is a gift too—and we love sharing it.

You'll also find our team out in the community beyond work—coaching youth sports, volunteering at local events, serving on non-profit boards, and partnering with our Chamber of Commerce to keep our local economy strong. Because when you're part of a co-op, giving back isn't a requirement—it's just what you do.

While the holiday season is a festive time, we understand these can be tough times for many. If you need advice on saving energy to reduce your energy bills, want to explore payment plan options, or you simply have questions—please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help, not just during the holiday season, but all year long.

At Eastern Iowa REC, we believe concern for community is more than a value—it's the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we're especially grateful to be part of such a caring, generous community.

From all of us at Eastern Iowa REC, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.



**From the Boardroom, October, 2025**

- Discussed relocating the Lone Tree Service Center.
- Received and discussed CFC Key Ratio trend analysis.
- Received a report on the Cooperative's updated disconnect process.

*The next board meeting will be held on December 17, 2025.*

## Cooperative bylaws can be obtained online

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, copies of the bylaws of Eastern Iowa REC are available to anyone interested, either members of the Cooperative or the general public, at the

reception counter of the headquarters office at Wilton, Iowa. The Bylaws are available online at [www.easterniowa.com](http://www.easterniowa.com) under the My Cooperative tab or you may call 1-855-938-3616 to request a copy.

## Current News Monthly Quiz

### Quiz Winners:

Paul & Bonnie Reeb,  
Muscatine

Linda Bailey,  
Maquoketa

Kevin Lilienthal,  
New Liberty

Carol Horning,  
Ainsworth

Mail your answers to Current News, P.O. Box 3003, Wilton, IA 52778 or email answers to [info@easterniowa.com](mailto:info@easterniowa.com). Be sure to include your name, address and Eastern Iowa REC account number on all quiz answer entries.

Four winners will be drawn from all submissions with the correct answers. The winners will receive a \$25 bill credit.

### Question 1

When are the 2026 director nomination petitions due?

### Question 2

What hours are the payment kiosks available?

### Question 3

Name one of the energy efficiency gadgets in the story on page 3.



Name

Address

REC Account

## Current News



BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Ken Purdy, president; Kurt Olson, vice president; Michael Bixler, secretary; Henry Bentley, treasurer; Bradley Weiss, assistant secretary; Gary Bruns, Joel Carstensen, Aubrey "Lee" Cartwright, Allan Duffe, Tom Hotz, Gary Kester, Robert Schnieder Jr., Mike Shuger, Denise Timmerman, Kathrine Wunderlich.

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