


THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF GUTHRIE COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



living with energy

IN IOWA

MARCH 2014

Bring in the butterflies!

Light outdoor spaces

for security and entertaining

Plant trees
for energy savings

We're giving
100 trees to 10 lucky
co-op members!

See Page 5



High school juniors:
There's still time
to win a 2014
Youth Tour trip

New Products

Prices are falling on latest LED lightbulbs

Philips has just introduced its second-generation LED bulbs that fit standard fixtures, and the company is working with The Home Depot to offer lower pricing too: \$19.97 for its 15-watt LED (75-watt equivalent and 1,180 lumens) and \$24.97 for its 19-watt LED (100-watt equivalent and 1,680 lumens). Both bulbs offer a soft white light, are Energy Star® qualified and have a rated life 25 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs. ⚡



Make sure you get tax credits for your qualifying Energy Star® purchases.

These products for your primary residence are eligible for 10 percent of the cost up to \$500 – or a specific amount from \$50-\$300: air-source heat pumps, central air conditioners, boilers, furnaces, insulation, roofs, non-solar water heaters, windows and doors. For more information, go to www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.



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

About Energy

Geothermal is earth's natural source of heat

Geothermal energy has been used for thousands of years for cooking and bathing. But modern technology has unlocked new ways to harness geothermal potential: producing electricity using hot water and steam locked below the Earth's surface – and heating and cooling buildings.

In May 2012, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad signed SF 2342, legislation that for the first time enacted a series of Iowa tax incentives for residential geothermal equipment. Geothermal heat pumps installed on residential properties in Iowa are eligible for a tax credit equal to 20 percent of a federal tax credit (30 percent of cost). Homeowners also can claim an additional 6 percent of the system cost, or one-fifth of the federal amount, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2012.

SF 2342 also implemented a 10-year property tax exemption for geothermal heating and cooling systems, which means if a system increases a home's assessed value, the homeowners won't pay taxes on that added amount for 10 years. Since then, the incentive has kept geothermal installers busy in Iowa, motivating customers who previously had hesitated. The bulk of the work has been retrofits, rather than new home construction, because new drilling technology has made installations much easier in existing homes.

According to the Iowa Utilities Board, an estimated 2,000 residential geothermal installations occur each year and include both new construction and replacement systems. Guthrie County REC has had 18 members take advantage of the rebates for geothermal.

"It ended up being cheaper for us in the long run," said Brian Marso of

Guthrie Center, who had geothermal installed last year when building a new home. "We're planning on living there awhile, so it was good for us. With the tax credit and rebates you can get, it's the only way to go for new construction."

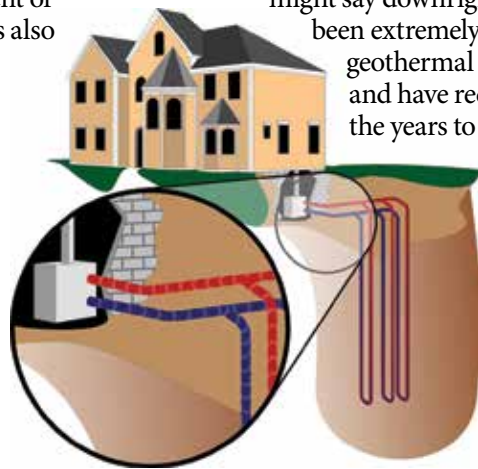
Patrick Moylan signed up for geothermal when he and his wife, Debbie, built a new home at Lake Panorama in 1992, while the technology still was in its infancy. "There were some rebates, so we decided to go with it and have never looked back," said Patrick. "Our heating and cooling costs over the years have been very reasonable – some might say downright cheap. We have been extremely happy with the geothermal ground source heat and have recommended it over the years to our friends and customers."

A geothermal heat pump is the most efficient heating and cooling system available, because it returns up to 4 dollars of heating (or cooling) energy for every

dollar of electricity consumed. A geothermal heat pump doesn't burn fuel to create heat; instead, it uses electricity to move heat from the ground through a large loop of buried, fluid-filled pipes to a compressor located inside the home.

While geothermal heat pumps generally operate more efficiently than their air-source cousins, they are more expensive to purchase. However, the federal tax credit equal to 30 percent of the cost for materials and installation, with no limit on total project expenses, applies to geothermal heat pumps through Dec. 31, 2016.

A geothermal heat pump is a great option, but it might not be the best choice for every situation. Contact Guthrie County REC to determine whether a geothermal heat pump is the right choice for you. ⚡



How should you handle a late bill?

Perhaps you overextended your holiday cheer budget this year by giving beyond your means. It happens to all of us from time to time. It's no fun when the bills put off from December start piling up in January and February.

At Guthrie County REC, we're obligated to treat every member the same regardless of rate class, payment history or delinquent balance. In fact, much of what we do is determined and required by the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and is written into Iowa law. The disconnect notices we send out use language required by the IUB.

Whether you prefer to pay online, over the phone, drop off a check or send payment through the mail, if the payment doesn't arrive at the cooperative's office by the payment due date, a late charge automatically is applied to the account and a discon-

nect notice is mailed the following day. As a member, you're allowed one late payment per calendar year without penalty.

Don't worry that your electricity will be shut off without warning. Guthrie County REC representatives will attempt to contact you by phone before action is taken. (Please make sure the cooperative has your current phone number on file.) Also, Guthrie County REC will post a written notice at the service address 24 hours prior to disconnection.

Guthrie County REC is here to help its members in every way possible. If you find yourself unable to pay your electric bill by the due date, please contact the cooperative. It's often possible to make alternative payment arrangements, and staff can help you find financial assistance if needed. ⚡



Editor's Choice Contest

We're giving 100 trees to 10 lucky co-op members!

To celebrate Arbor Day on April 25, we're giving away 10 one-year memberships to the Arbor Day Foundation, which includes a subscription to the organizations' bimonthly newsletter, a copy of *The Tree Book* and generous discounts on future tree purchases. Every winner also will receive a package of 10 free trees of his or her choice, from categories such as flowering trees, oaks, autumn classics and Colorado blue spruces.



For information on the Arbor Day Foundation, visit www.arborday.org. ⚡

Visit our website, and win!

To enter the contest, visit the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com and complete the entry form by March 31, 2014.

Contribute to RECare

The winter season can be an especially stressful time for those who worry about how to pay their heating bills. Guthrie County REC is proud to offer RECare, a neighbor-helping-neighbor program that's easy to join and goes a long way toward easing the financial strain on those in need.

Take a moment to fill out the form below to make either a one-time contribution or a monthly contribution – or to have your electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar. The funds collected are given to community action agencies that pass them on to low-income members within the co-op's service territory.

"We offer this program all year round, but the need is particularly strong now as we end the heating season," said Guthrie County REC general manager Cozy Nelsen. "Any amount is welcome and encouraged." ⚡

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. (Mail to: Guthrie County REC, 1406 State St., Guthrie Center, IA 50115.)
- I will contribute \$ _____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount will be added automatically to my monthly electric bill.
- I will have my monthly electric bill rounded. I understand my monthly bill will be rounded up to the next highest dollar automatically. *Example:* If your bill were \$154.85; you would be billed \$155 by Guthrie County REC and donate 15 cents to RECare. If your bill were \$154.01, Guthrie County REC would bill you \$155 and donate 99 cents to RECare.

Name _____

Guthrie County REC Acct. No. _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Spring clean your electric bills

Adding a few items to your list of spring chores can help make your home more energy efficient and deliver electric bills that won't make you sweat when temperatures soar.

Start with your air conditioner. Spring and early summer are good times to make sure that your air-conditioning unit is ready to work when you flip the switch:

- Get help from a professional who can inspect and service your unit.
- Give your air conditioner a do-it-yourself cleaning. Shut the unit off and turn off power to the system at the breaker box. Then clear away leaves and yard debris outside, around the compressor and its coils, and gently dust the fan blades. Inside your home, clean or replace the filter so airflow isn't restricted, reducing overall efficiency by making the air conditioner work harder on hot summer days. Also vacuum registers to remove any dust buildup.
- When using a window air conditioner, ensure that weather stripping is in place all around the unit to prevent warm air leaks into your home.

From the ground, you also should check how well your roof has weath-



ered the winter. Few things can shorten the life of your home faster than a roof leak; even a minor one can damage ceilings, walls and attic insulation before you know it. A roofing professional can assess and repair things such as loose or missing shingles, clear gutters and repair leaks.

Make your electric cooperative a resource. Guthrie County REC can help you determine the right steps for increasing the energy efficiency of your home, including whether an energy audit will help find hidden savings. You also can visit www.TogetherWeSave.com to find out how little measures around the house can add up to big energy savings as outside temperatures climb. ⚡

Apply by April 11 for scholarships

Local high school and college students are encouraged to apply for this year's scholarship opportunities from Guthrie County REC.

Each year, Guthrie County REC supports the community by giving three scholarships of \$500 each to students within our service territory. Scholarship applicants must be U.S. citizens or resident aliens and children of Guthrie County REC members. Students also must be enrolled for the 2014-2015 academic year in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited college, university or vocational/technical school, emphasizing study in the fields of business, electronic technology, electrical or agricultural engineering – or a power line program.

Applications must be postmarked on or before April 11, 2014, and you can find one – along with more information – at www.guthrie-rec.coop. ⚡



One of last year's scholarship recipients, **Therese Frels (center)**, is pictured with her parents, **Doug Frels** and **Donna Paglialunga of Guthrie Center**. Therese currently is a freshman studying physics at the **South Dakota School of Mines and Technology** in Rapid City, S.D.

