



**Bartholomew
County REMC**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 
The power of human connections

1697 W. Deaver Road
Columbus, IN 47201

812-372-2546
www.bcremc.com

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Closed Saturdays and Sundays

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Ketner, President
Curt Burbrink, Vice President
Janet Anthony, Secretary
Dan Fleming, Treasurer
**Ron Arnholt, Larry Hoeltke, and
Charles Meier**

STAFF

Jim Turner
General Manager/CEO
Matthew Hackman
Corporate Services Manager
Andrew Yordy
Consumer Services Manager
Marty Lasure
Manager of Public Relations and
Member Services

SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

To report an outage or emergency
Call **372-2546**
7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.,
Monday-Friday.
After-Hours
Call **372-5333** or **800-927-5672**

MISSION STATEMENT

"Bartholomew County REMC exists to provide reliable energy and quality services at competitive prices to members and customers that add value to the communities we serve."



Touchstone Energy®

CO-opNews Information from your electric cooperative

CEO'S COMMENTS

Capital credits to be returned

Did you know that because you are part of an electric cooperative you are more than just a customer to Bartholomew County REMC, you are also part owner of your cooperative? You have the freedom to participate in the election process which determines the board of directors that run your electric cooperative.

Your elected board members make decisions that affect the financial position of your co-op. Although the economy has weathered some hard times, the stewardship of your board has provided your cooperative with the fiscal stability to begin returning a portion of your investment. These investments are known as capital credits.

Your cooperative does not earn profits in the sense other businesses do. Instead, any margins, or revenues, remaining after all expenses are paid are allocated to the members in proportion to their use of the co-op's services. This money, or capital credits, represents each member's share of the cooperative's margins and ownership of the co-op. Our bylaws allow the cooperative to use these funds for a period of time to maintain operations and a healthy financial position.

Every business needs to maintain a suitable balance between debt and equity to ensure its financial health and stability. Capital credits are the most significant source of equity for most electric cooperatives. This equity is used to help meet the expenses of the co-op, such as paying for new equipment to serve members and repaying debt. Capital credits are your investment to help keep rates at a



Jim Turner
General Manager/CEO

competitive level by reducing the amount of funds that must be borrowed. Without the use of these funds, your electric service would be susceptible to a higher financial risk.

BCREMC is happy to report the financial status of your co-op has allowed the board of directors to approve the cash payment of capital credits. The payments will be paid on a 25-year rotation schedule beginning this year. If you are a member that has been on our lines longer than 25 years, you will receive a "catch up" check later this year. These will be in proportion to your use and the cooperative margins from the years 1970-1985.

You may be accustomed to receiving checks from capital credits received from Hoosier Energy, our power supplier. Bartholomew County REMC is a member of Hoosier Energy – that makes you a member as well. Your Bartholomew County REMC capital credit payment will be in addition to the Hoosier Energy capital credit checks. The Hoosier Energy board of directors will continue to authorize the retirement of its capital credits as it sees fit.

For Bartholomew County REMC, the board of directors has established a goal of returning capital credits to the members on a regular basis. The board will determine yearly whether your co-op's financial position permits the return, or retirement, of capital credits and what amount of capital credits will be retired. The capital credits having been invested in cooperative the longest will be returned to members first.

please turn to page 8A

Tracker increases this month

On your second quarter bills, BCREMC members will see a tracker. The easiest explanation of a tracker is to say, "It's a billing adjustment to cover the fluctuating cost of power we purchase on your behalf."

Gasoline stations have an advantage in that they can change the cost of a gallon of gas every day when the cost of the product increases. Utility companies, like BCREMC, don't have the luxury of changing their base kilowatt rates every day to cover the fluctuation in the cost of power. This basic premise is the reason the energy tracker is on your bill.

The power we buy every day to sell to you fluctuates as much as gasoline prices. The energy tracker allows us to keep our base rates low at

all times, but still collect the money we will owe for the purchased power.

There is no mark-up in the tracker. There is no profit made from the tracker. It is not a flat fee. It is only a fluctuating pass-through cost from the power supplier to us and then to you.

The good news is, YOU can directly affect the energy tracker cost on your bill. It is directly proportional to YOUR kilowatt use in your home each month. If you conserve energy, your tracker cost will go down.

Reflected on bills in mid-April, Bartholomew County REMC members will see a slight increase in the wholesale tracker adjustment effective April 1. The second quarter tracker will be \$0.002471 per kwh or approximately \$2.47 per 1,000 kwh used.

CEO'S COMMENTS

continued from page 7A

In the coming months, we will continue to provide you with more information regarding your capital credits. In May, each member will receive a letter from us explaining the total amount of capital credits that have been allocated to you. The board is pleased to be able to pay out capital credits to the long-term members and is committed to paying capital credits in the future to the generations currently invested in the cooperative. The full updated capital credit policy is posted on our website at www.bcremc.com/bylaws.html under Article VII.

Better rules for broken bulbs CFL cleanup guidance updated by EPA

As energy-savvy consumers know, equipping five of a home's most frequently used light fixtures with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can save a family \$70 a year in lighting costs. But what should you do when a CFL breaks?

CFLs are made of glass tubing containing about 4 milligrams of mercury. Although this isn't much — classic thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury — consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks since mercury vapors may pose health risks. In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updated the guidelines for cleaning a broken CFL.

For the most up-to-date detailed guidance on cleaning up and safely disposing of a broken CFL, please visit: www.epa.gov/cflcleanup.—
Source: EPA

CFL/bulb exchange day May 20

The next light bulb trade-in day will be May 20 at the BCREMC office, 1697 W. Deaver Road, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Any member bringing in an old incandescent bulb will receive a new CFL as a replacement.

The exchange limit is 15 — bring in 15 incandescent bulbs and we will give you 15 CFLs. Keep in mind we will have only 60-, 75- and 100-watt equivalents and floodlights. The idea of the trade-in days is for the bulbs that you receive to be put in use. For those already receiving 15, you are welcome to come and get more if you need them to replace the incandescent lighting you currently use. We don't want them sitting on a shelf.

Remember to always recycle spent CFL bulbs. BCREMC has a recycle program. Drop off your spent CFL bulbs (please, no broken bulbs), and they will be recycled properly. If a CFL stops working, it should be properly recycled, not thrown in the trash.

Keep reading *Electric Consumer* for more trade-in days throughout 2011!



Alternative voting to be offered to members in 2012

BCREMC is pleased to announce that in 2012, all members will have the option to vote for the board of directors and nominating committee members through the mail or the Internet prior to the annual meeting.

Thirty days prior to the 2012 annual meeting, all members will receive, via mail, a packet that will include a ballot for voting and instructions for casting your vote on-line or an envelope to mail in your ballot.

We are using a certified election management company that will handle the tabulation of votes to ensure accuracy and to keep your vote anonymous. However, we will still have an annual meeting and you will still have the option to come to the meeting and cast your vote. These alternative voting methods will open the voting up to the full membership and will reinforce the fact that you

are a member of a cooperative and have a voice, even if you aren't able to attend the meeting.

Your board has decided to continue the \$20 bill credit for coming to next year's meeting. So, those of you that can attend the meeting will still receive the bill credit and a gift for attending. We feel that you should be rewarded for taking the time to come out to the meeting. We appreciate your attendance.

Alternative voting methods will allow us to open up the democracy to those unable to attend the annual meeting. Many times, we have had elderly members wanting to cast their vote, but their health prevents them from coming to the meeting, or a young couple has had sporting events to attend for their children.

We understand everyone is busy, but still wants to remain involved in their cooperative. The new voting method will allow that opportunity.

Bulbs die differently

Know the signals for a CFL's end-of-life

Worried when you hear a compact fluorescent lightbulb (CFL) pop or sizzle? Despite confusion caused by an e-mail hoax circulating, these sounds signal the bulb is working safely in its final hours. Smoke, a popping noise, and even a slight odor are typical and do not pose a fire risk as claimed in the misleading e-mail.

According to Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), an independent, not-for-profit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric-consuming items, about 130-150 million CFLs are sold every year in the U.S. While the bulbs produce 75 percent less heat than their incandescent cousins, differences between the bulbs go deeper than the amount of heat released. As the first wave of CFLs begins reaching the end of their lifespan, consumers are learning the bulbs die differently, too.

"As with any new product, it's important that consumers understand how it works," noted John Drengenberg, UL's consumer affairs manager.

Most folks know traditional incandescent lightbulbs tend to burn out the same way — a pop, a flash, and, when shaken, the familiar rattle confirming the bulb needs to be changed. With CFLs, light dims over time and the lamp may produce a more dramatic pop, emit a distinct odor, and even release some smoke. Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black, which is normal in most cases as safety standards require application of special flame-retardant plastics.

"CFLs are one of the products we regularly test to specific requirements for electrical safety, fire, and shock hazards," Drengenberg explained. "Any popping sounds or smoke that a consumer might

see when a CFL burns out means that the bulb's end-of-life mechanism worked as it should have."

Consumers should look for the UL mark on packaging when purchasing CFLs.

"If a CFL carries the UL mark, consumers know we have investigated it to specific safety requirements," reported Drengenberg.

For more information, visit www.SafetyAtHome.com. — Source: Underwriters Laboratories



Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black as the bulb dims, as shown in the photo at left. This is normal, in most cases, because safety standards require use of special flame-retardant plastics in the base.

Restoring power after an outage

Outages are the most trying situations of our business. Some are caused by storms, some caused by traffic accidents, and some are caused by carelessness, vandalism and even wildlife. All are unpredictable. Regardless of the cause, a power outage is frustrating and inconvenient for both you and the REMC.

The first week of February was a challenging time for BCREMC. The Groundhog Day mega storm affected 30 states and 100 million people across the country.

This storm swept through our service territory leaving ice, for a short period of time, knocking down trees, electric lines, and poles cutting power off to parts of our whole territory for varying periods of time over two days.

At the peak of the outages, around 4,000 members were without electricity. BCREMC linemen were immediately dispatched and several additional contract crews, along with crews from Johnson County REMC and Orange County REMC were called in to help. Our call center CRC (Cooperative Response Center) received a record amount of calls due to this widespread storm that pummeled the entire midwest and northeast territories.

The extreme call volume also offered challenges for CRC and its member utilities, like BCREMC. The call volume received during this period reached capacity at the AT&T level, as well as some local exchanges. This means that some calls were never presented to CRC, resulting in callers receiving a busy signal. This event marks only the third time in CRC's 18-year history that callers received a busy signal at the AT&T level, but the first time ever at this magnitude.

BCREMC would like to thank you for your patience, understanding and cooperation. We want to emphasize that reporting an outage is very important and want to make sure the call center problem from this storm does not discourage you from calling in an outage in the future. Service is our number one priority and knowing that you have an outage helps us respond better.

When severe weather hits, we have plans in place to respond quickly and make repairs that restore service to the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time. Who gets their power restored first? How do we make those decisions? Bartholomew County REMC's intent is to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. These are the steps we take when deciding where to send crews during a widespread outage.

1. Substations/transmission lines/emergencies

BCREMC has 10 substations and two metering points where electricity is sent out over the



Following an outage, Bartholomew County REMC's intent is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible to its members.

REMC distribution lines. Any problems with the substations or the transmission lines getting the power to that substation must be attended to first before other damages can be detected and repaired. During this time, we also respond to emergency accident situations.

2. Main distribution lines

Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, farms, and businesses. BCREMC checks its main distribution lines if the problem doesn't involve a transmission line or substation.

3. Supply lines

BCREMC's main distribution lines branch off into final supply lines, which are often called tap lines. The REMC works supply line outages to restore electricity to the greatest number of members at one time.

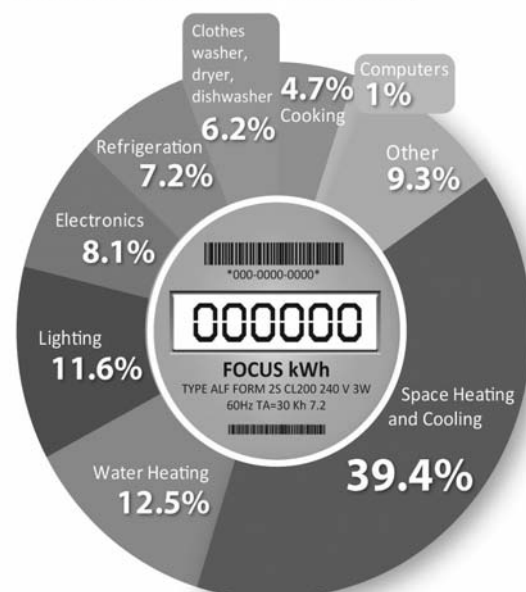
4. Individual outages

Sometimes a problem lies at an individual transformer or on a tap line that serves one meter. These are usually the last to be restored, unless a crew is working on supply line outages in the same area. During a storm, trees are normally the culprit to these individual outages.

Our greatest concern is keeping our members safe and well informed. During widespread outages, BCREMC will release news bulletins to the following area radio stations: QMIX 107.3, KORN Country 100.3, and White River Broadcasting: 104.9, 106.1, 101.5, and 1010 AM. Also, sign up for e-mail alerts at <http://www.columbusarealert.com> or check this website for up-to-date information.

Again, thank you for your patience during the February storm. We hope this information is helpful in understanding our procedure in dealing with outages when they occur.

How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

The right move after an auto accident involving power lines

When a vehicle accident brings down a power line, a driver's natural instinct tells him/her to flee danger. Unfortunately, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

If your car hits a power pole, or is otherwise involved in a scene with a downed power line, BCREMC urges you to stay inside the auto and wait for help. If you come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene. The ground around the accident could be energized.

Often our inclination is to step in to help those in danger, but in accidents involving power poles, your best action is to call for help. Wait for the utility to arrive and de-energize the line, or you could become another accident victim in need of rescue.

If you must get out of the automobile because of fire or other danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop or shuffle with feet together — don't run or stride, which allows one foot to move from one voltage zone to another. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance.

The same rules apply to situations involving large farm and construction equipment that comes in contact with overhead lines. Those working with large equipment should stay inside the cab or remain on the vehicle if equipment extensions come in contact with power lines. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off.



Happy Easter from all of us at BCREMC!

Our office will be closed on Good Friday, April 22.

CO-OP NOTES

Rate schedule

Schedule "A" — residential and farm service

Electric Grid Connection Fee... \$30.34 per month
All kWh per month..... \$0.09278 per kWh
Tracking clause..... \$0.002471 per kWh

Schedule "B" — commercial and small power service

Electric Grid Connection Fee:
Single-phase service..... \$30.97 per month
Three-phase service..... \$43.97 per month
Tracking clause..... \$0.002471 per kWh

All kWh per month:

June, July, Aug. \$0.12363 per kWh
Dec., Jan., Feb. \$0.10077 per kWh
Sept., Oct., Nov., March, April, and May
..... \$0.06970 per kWh

Schedule "LP" — large power service

Electric Grid Connection Fee..... \$60 per month

Demand charge:

June, July, Aug. \$19.51 per kw
Dec., Jan., Feb. \$14.16 per kw
Sept., Oct., Nov., March, April, and May
..... \$11.62 per kw

Energy charges:

All kWh..... \$0.03877 per kWh
Tracking clause..... \$0.002471 per kWh

Schedule "SL" — Monthly Security Light Billing

Security Lights:

175-watt mercury vapor \$7.15 per month
400-watt mercury vapor \$13.65 per month
100-watt high pressure sodium.. \$7.15 per month
250-watt high pressure sodium .. \$12.15 per month

Flood Lights:

400-watt mercury vapor \$14.15 per month
1,000-watt mercury vapor..... \$30.15 per month
250-watt high pressure sodium... \$12.15 per month
400-watt high pressure sodium.... \$17.15 per month

The above charges are for security lights installed on existing REMC poles. If a new pole needs to be installed to serve the security light, the above costs will increase by \$4 per month.

Don't dig blind

Call toll free: 1-800-382-5544

Products provided by your local REMC:

- Electricity • EnviroWatts • Local Internet
- Metered LP gas • Surge protection devices
- GenerLink • Water heaters • Long distance service • High speed satellite Internet connection

Services from your REMC:

- Incentives for heat pumps, central air, geothermal systems, and water heaters
- Automatic Monthly Payment Service
- Levelized billing
- Payment online
- Credit card payments

For details about these products and the services, call our office at 372-2546, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Pick up some cold cash.
When we pick up your old fridge.

Get \$30 back when you recycle your old fridge. Plus, save up to \$150 a year in energy costs.

It doesn't make financial sense to keep an old fridge or freezer in your garage or basement – not when it uses up to four times the energy of newer models. And throwing it away isn't a good long-term plan for the environment. Why not let us recycle it? We'll haul it away free of charge, you'll get a \$30 rebate, and you can save up to \$150 a year in energy costs. Talk about a good return on investment.

Call 877-395-5535 or visit your Touchstone Energy Cooperative's website for pickup.

Refrigerators and freezers must be in working condition, and must be between 10 and 30 cubic feet in size, using inside measurements. Hoosier Energy REC, Inc. contracts with JACO Environmental, an appliance recycler, to pick up and recycle refrigerators and freezers that are in working condition. This program is funded by Hoosier Energy REC, Inc. on behalf of your Touchstone Energy Cooperative and is available to its residential electric customers in Indiana on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is expended. Customers must own the unit(s) being recycled. Limit two units per residential address. Payment will be made to the Touchstone Energy Cooperative customer within 4-6 weeks after the appliance collection. Some restrictions apply. © 2011 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

\$30 REBATE

SAVE UP TO \$150/YR IN ENERGY COSTS


Touchstone Energy®
The power of human connections

Thank
you

**Thank you for attending
your annual meeting on
March 24!**

**Look for more details
about the meeting
in next month's
Electric Consumer.**