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THE ELECTRIC COMPANY THAT  
DOESN'T STOP AT YOUR METER

# NEWS

## FROM THE CEO

### We're Thankful for Our Sister Cooperatives



Kevin Brownlee

I am grateful  
for our sister  
co-ops who  
enable us to  
better serve  
you and  
our broader  
community.

When you think about Butler Electric Cooperative, you probably associate us with our local communities. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work in the communities we serve. What you may not realize is Butler is actually part of a much larger cooperative network bringing additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op.

#### Cooperation Among Cooperatives

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is Cooperation Among Cooperatives. Mutual aid is one example how co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources to efficiently and safely restore power to our community. Butler reciprocates this effort by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

Another area in which we benefit from Cooperation Among Cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program, we are able to

access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyberthreats.

Our ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

#### Global Impact

Communities across the globe have benefited from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in the electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of Butler and sister electric co-ops in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve — and that is something to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

#### Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 22 and all day Thursday, Nov. 23 and Friday, Nov. 24, in observance of the holiday. From our co-op family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving!



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# Purple Heart Returned to Family *After 78 Years*

BY DARCY LAHAM, BUTLER ELECTRIC CO-OP  
OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

"The internet can be good grandpa."

"I doubt it," grandpa would say.

"Grandpa, the internet can be used for good," I said.

"Not likely," he would say.

This is an argument that I had with my 102-year-old grandfather, **CARL DENTON COX**, about a year before he passed away. We had several discussions about what the internet was, how it worked, and what it could be used for. He had no use for the internet or computers, but he did enjoy seeing the pictures of his great-grandchildren on my phone.

My grandfather was born in 1915, in Horton, Kansas. He married in 1939, and in 1942 he and my grandmother moved to Wichita. In 1942, our country was in the middle of World War II, and like many Americans, he was eager to serve. He

hitched a ride to Kansas City to enlist, but when he arrived, he was told he had "tremors" (modern day Parkinsons), and was denied enlistment. His heart was broken. He wanted to serve his country.

The enlistment officer suggested he return to Wichita and continue his job at Beech Aircraft, where he could help his country by building war planes. And that is exactly what he did. He not only built war planes, but he excelled at building them. He won awards for updating designs to best suit the war efforts needs, all while managing a group of 25 women, historically referred to as Rosie the Riveters.

When my grandparents originally moved to Wichita, they gained new neighbors including Mr. Klingenberg, who became a lifelong friend. It was a much simpler time, when every neighbor was a friend, and neighbors helped neighbors whenever they could. When this neighbor passed away, the task of clearing out his house and family belongings was thrust upon my grandparents. Some items were sold, many were donated, and others were tucked away in boxes in their basement.

When my grandfather passed away in 2019, my mother and aunt discovered a Purple Heart in its original case accompanied by the original award letter while cleaning out his basement. They speculated who the award belonged to, but didn't know how to return it.



Darcy Laham, Butler Electric Co-op operations assistant, left, returns award to the family of a war hero.

Upon hearing about this medal, I was compelled to search for the family of this war hero. Finding the family was a much more difficult task than I imagined. However, I persevered, knowing that if this medal belonged to a family member of mine, we would want it returned to our family. I decided the internet was my only option — what would grandpa have thought!

I began searching for family members of this fallen soldier. I searched internet postings and genealogy records of his family, but I could not find a living relative. Realizing I may never find the soldier's surviving family members, I contacted the non-profit group, The Purple Heart Mission for help. The group recommended that I mail the medal to them, and they would attempt to find the family. I was nervous about sending the irreplaceable medal, letter and box through the mail, so I considered other options.

I managed to find that the soldier's body had been moved from its burial place in France and re-buried in a Wichita cemetery. Using the Find a Grave website, I left a message for the family to contact me. Every day, I looked at that medal sitting on my dresser and wondered if I would ever hear from the family. Several months went by

without a word, so I arranged to donate the medal to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars. Admittedly, I was dragging my feet, but in hindsight, I'm so glad I did!

On Oct. 19, 2022, I received a text message I with the message, "I think my husband is the cousin you are looking for." I couldn't believe it! I had waited three years for a response.

The family of the soldier was very interested in genealogy and they were able to verify and provide additional details about this young soldier's life story. My hero soldier had died at age 31, on Jan. 1, 1945, in the Ardennes Region of Belgium, along with 714 other brave soldiers at the Battle of the Bulge.

The medal was reunited with the soldier's family on May 20, 2023. We met on a beautiful, sunny day in Olathe, Kansas, where I proudly returned the Purple Heart to my hero's family. I learned that my hero's distant cousin was also a veteran and was working at the Veterans Administration hospital helping wounded soldiers with their prosthetics. It was a GREAT reunion — the medal was home!

I am eternally grateful that my grandfather cared enough about his neighbor to treasure and keep safe the medal of this war hero.

**My hero soldier had died at the age of 31, on Jan. 1, 1945, in the Ardennes Region of Belgium, along with 714 other brave soldiers, at the Battle of the Bulge.**



*Happy*

**THANKSGIVING**

**— YOU —**

**DESERVE A**

*Hand*

WE APPRECIATE YOUR LOYALTY AND LOOK FORWARD TO PUTTING NEW TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR HANDS FOR YEARS TO COME.



**Butler Electric Cooperative**  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



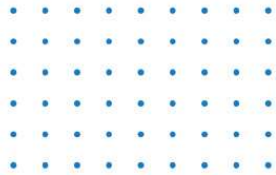
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**First Electricity.  
Now Internet.**



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[www.velocity.coop](http://www.velocity.coop)

## FIBER INTERNET IS COMING!

**Velocity** is bringing world-class fiber broadband directly to rural Kansas, making business, health care, education and entertainment infinitely more accessible and affordable. Butler Electric Cooperative has received a \$10 million Kansas Capital Grant to provide high-speed fiber-to-the-home for 3,300 members! We understand the need for higher-speed internet options is dire throughout our rural communities, and we are actively seeking additional funding to expand the fiber network.

## OUR SERVICES

Every household or business is different, so we offer packages to work for your needs and budget!



### INTERNET

Fast, reliable high-speed Internet (Fiber and Fixed-Wireless)



### HD-QUALITY VOICE

Crystal-clear phone services for your home or business



### LOCAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT

From your local, trusted electric cooperative



*What can you do with  
high-speed internet?*

- + Connect all of your devices with improved reliability and the **speed you need**
- + Work from home **seamlessly** without interruption
- + **Power up** distance learning
- + Unwind by surfing the web and streaming movies or TV shows **simultaneously**

