



The ECE Board of Directors has approved a capital credits payout of over **\$2.2 MILLION** for 2023!

CEO column  
Let's talk rates

Inflation  
Cost of materials

Safety  
Hunting safely

November 2023

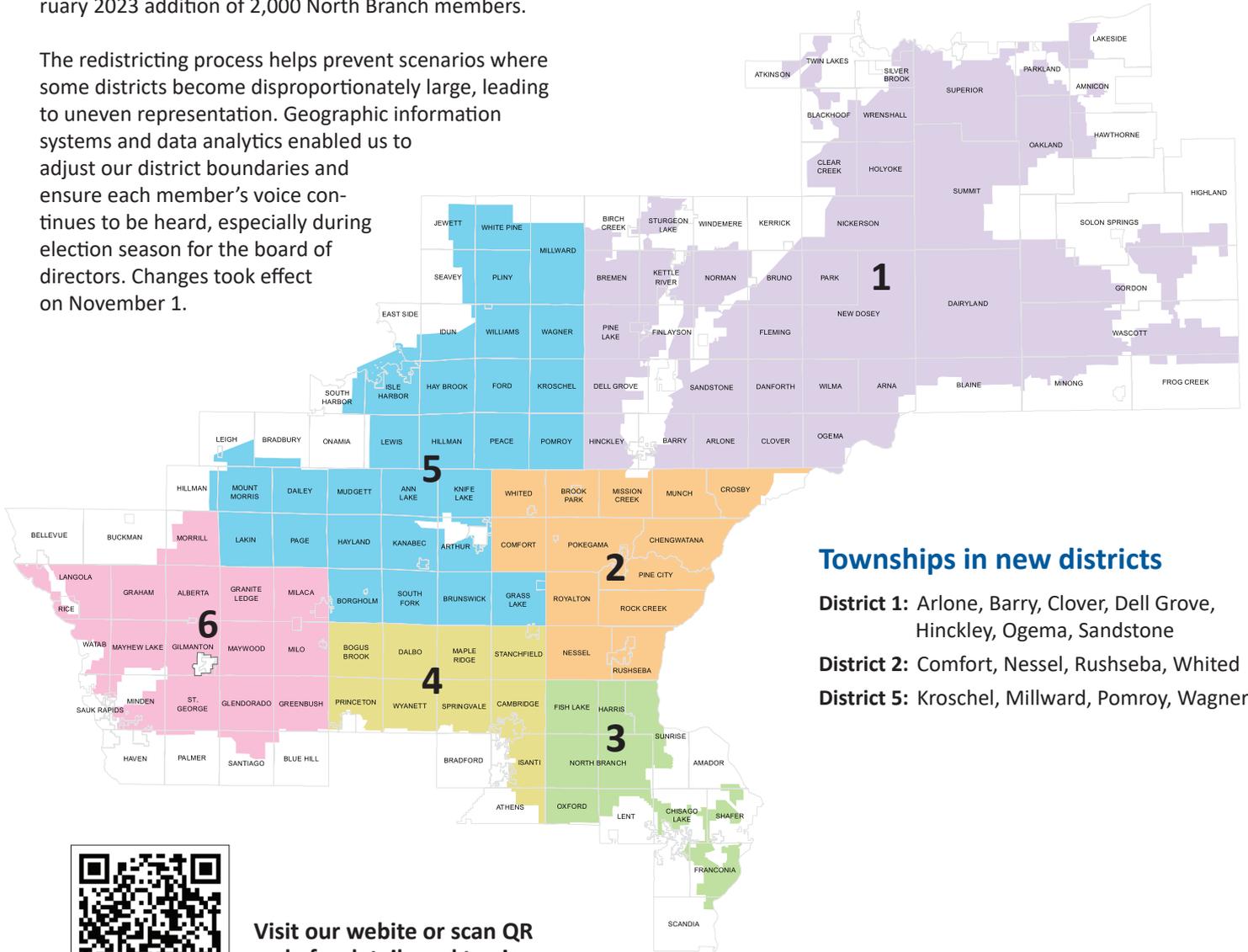
# ECE Co-op Advantage

## Are you in a new district?

We strive to provide reliable electricity while upholding the principles of fair representation. Redistricting, the process of adjusting boundaries of our six representation zones, has been a critical task for our board of directors since the February 2023 addition of 2,000 North Branch members.

The redistricting process helps prevent scenarios where some districts become disproportionately large, leading to uneven representation. Geographic information systems and data analytics enabled us to adjust our district boundaries and ensure each member's voice continues to be heard, especially during election season for the board of directors. Changes took effect on November 1.

### NEW DISTRICT MAP



### Townships in new districts

- District 1:** Arlone, Barry, Clover, Dell Grove, Hinckley, Ogema, Sandstone
- District 2:** Comfort, Nessel, Rushseba, Whited
- District 5:** Kroschel, Millward, Pomroy, Wagner



Visit our website or scan QR code for details and to view an interactive district map.



**PRESIDENT/CEO**  
**JUSTIN JAHNZ**

Let's talk rates

**THIS JUST-in**



ECE is committed to providing you with reliable electricity while maintaining the financial stability necessary to support our mission. To this end, we have recently conducted a comprehensive cost-of-service study to ensure that we continue to meet these commitments in the face of evolving challenges.

As a result of this study, we will soon be implementing a rate adjustment. This rate change is not a decision we make lightly, and it is an important step to ensuring the future success of your electric cooperative. Several key factors have necessitated this adjustment:

**1. Rising cost of equipment**

The infrastructure and equipment required to deliver electricity to your homes and businesses have become increasingly expensive to maintain and upgrade. Ensuring the reliability and safety of our service is paramount, and these costs have risen significantly.

**2. Remaining competitive in an evolving industry**

Our cooperative operates in an industry that is constantly evolving. To continue providing you with the high-quality service you expect, we must remain competitive and attract top talent. This requires investments in our workforce and the technologies that will shape the future of electricity delivery.

**3. Passage of time since our last adjustment**

ECE's residential members have not seen a rate adjustment since 2018, and commercial accounts were last adjusted in 2019. In the years since then, inflation and the cost of doing business have continued to rise. This current adjustment is an essential step in keeping pace with these economic changes.

**4. Ensuring financial stability**

Maintaining a strong financial foundation is vital to our ability to serve you reliably, both now and in the future. A rate adjustment is crucial to sustaining a healthy margin and equity position, which directly benefits our members when we secure low-interest capital to reinvest in our infrastructure.

We understand that any adjustment in rates can be concerning. Still, we remain steadfast in our dedication to serving you, our valued members, to the best of our abilities. We will continue to explore cost-saving measures and innovative solutions to ensure you receive the exceptional service you deserve.

As details are finalized by the board of directors, we will provide more information regarding the rate adjustment, including the specific changes and how they may affect your electric bills. We are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way, and we welcome any questions or concerns you may have.

Your trust in us is what drives our co-op forward, and we want to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the challenges and decisions we face together. Your support and understanding are greatly appreciated, and we look forward to working collaboratively to secure a bright and sustainable future for ECE!

At your service we remain,

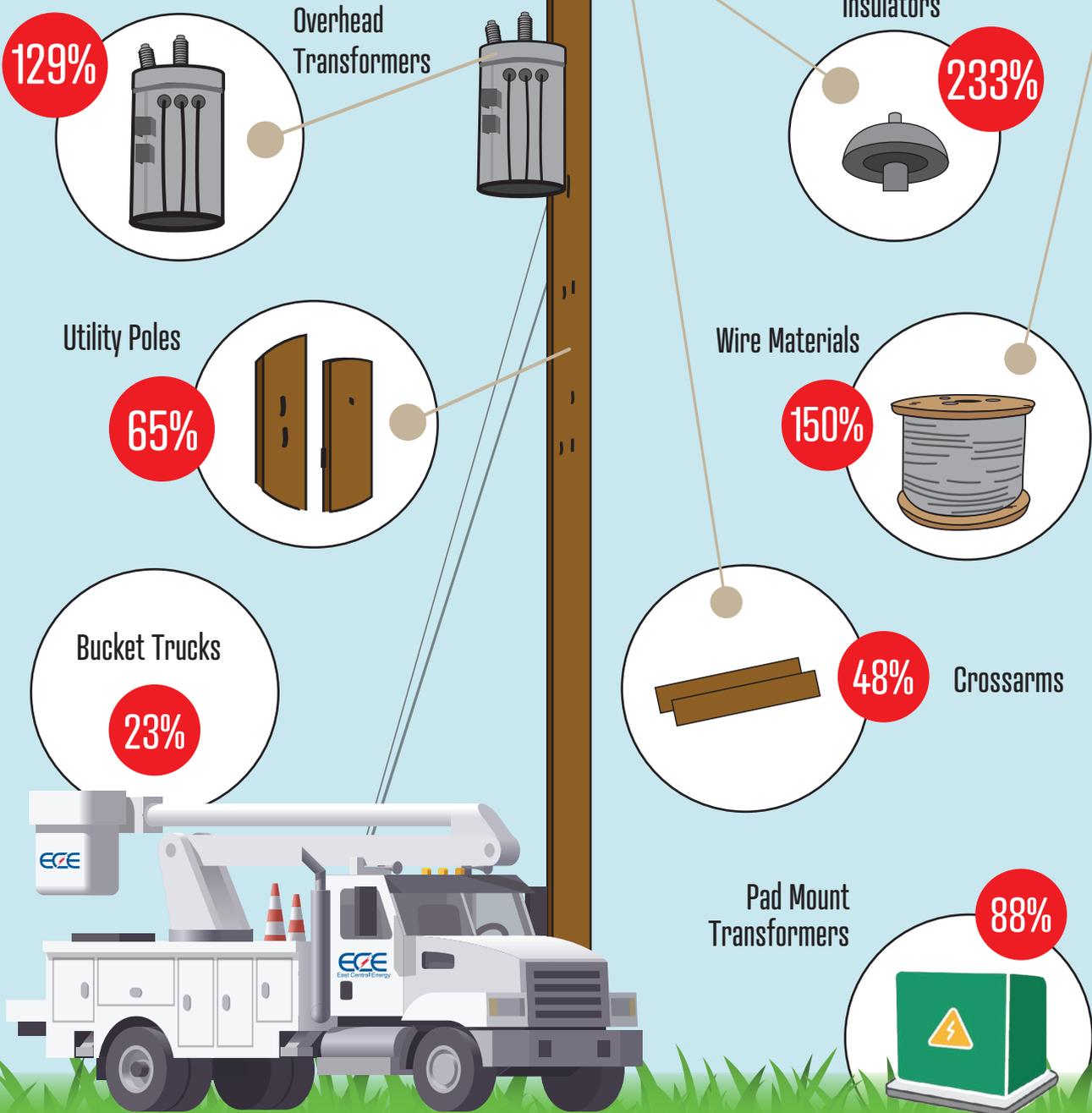
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Justin'.

# The Rising Costs of Electric Utility Materials

Percentages shown represent the increase in the cost of ECE materials from 2018 to 2023.

For all of us, inflation has increased the cost of goods and services. These increases cannot be avoided or easily cut out, and ECE must continue to invest in necessary materials to ensure you receive reliable service.

The graphic below shows some of those core components. As always, we will continue to manage resources wisely while keeping your best interests in mind.



Disclaimer: Material price increase numbers represent recent averages in our region. Local material prices can and do fluctuate.

# Load control device replacement



Energy Services Electrician Milt replacing a load control device

For those of you who participate in our off-peak programs, our Energy Services Electricians are in the process of replacing around 13,000 load control devices on member homes. Current load management technology is becoming obsolete.

The device, located near your load management electric meter, helps us shift energy use, saving power costs and resources. In exchange, you take advantage of lower energy rates.

It will be a quick process with little to no power interruption. If you want to check out how it works, visit our website to watch a short video!

## Hunting safely

As fall turns to winter, Safety Administrator Pete Leibel shares a few important tips to consider when spending time outdoors this hunting season.



- Keep a safe distance from power lines to help prevent accidental contact, especially if you're carrying tall equipment like tree stands. Set your stand away from electrical equipment.
- If you own wooded property, avoid attaching stands or signs to power poles. It is illegal and can damage our line-workers' protective gear—putting their lives at risk.

Pete stresses, "Safety should always be your top priority. Even the biggest game is never worth electrical injury or even death." And remember, if you see something suspicious or concerning near ECE infrastructure, stay back and call us at 1-800-254-7944.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

East Central Energy  
PO Box 39  
Braham, MN 55006

Braham Service Center  
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

1.800.254.7944

General business calls are answered Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Email: [info@ecemn.com](mailto:info@ecemn.com)

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call Executive Administrator Wendy Leibel at 763-689-8046 to confirm meeting information. Monthly board meeting highlights and board operating policies can be found on SmartHub.

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, your not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com)



## Give the gift of energy!

Available in any amount, an energy gift certificate from ECE is a perfect choice for anyone with an ECE bill who could use a happy surprise! Simply download the certificate order form from the Payment Options page on our website or scan the QR code below, then mail to ECE with a check or money order. Have the certificate of any amount sent to you or directly to the recipient. You can even send it anonymously. The gift of energy may be just what a friend or family member needs right now!

Scan to download gift certificate order form. 



Holiday office closings

November 23 and 24  
December 25



GIVE THANKS



EAT PIE

*ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

THE ECE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS APPROVED  
A CAPITAL CREDITS PAYOUT OF **\$2.2 MILLION**

As an ECE member, you share in our financial success.  
Capital credits are your slice of the pie!

**ECE** 1.800.254.7944  
eastcentralenergy.com