# MAPPING THE road ahead

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

#### New year, new faces

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative is proud to invest in the training and development of its employees with the goal of providing our members with the highest level of service.

We welcomed six employees in 2023 – Kyle Fagin, Kelsey James, Alyssa Maurits, Ryleigh Hollen, Cody Holthaus, Ryan Kerr, and Evan Rauch. We also celebrated ten employee promotions. Laura Smith, Bob Conrad, Mason Miller, Riley Salyers, Jade Guthrie, Andy Denny, Cheryl Mathews, Alyssa Maurits, Kyle Fagin, Joshua Smock, and Lori Maynard received promotions in 2023. Lineworkers Seth Fricke and Andrew Strait also graduated the apprentice lineworker program at The Central Ohio Lineworker Training facility in Mount Gilead, Ohio. We welcome these new employees and congratulate our employees on their hard work and dedication to the cooperative and its members.

We celebrated two retirements in 2023. Rodney Taylor and Judie Persinger provided outstanding service to our members for many years. We will miss them, and I know many members will miss seeing them in our office and at our events. We wish them each a happy retirement.

#### **Combating inflation**

Although inflation has lead to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

In 2023, we received approval of a \$15 million loan from the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, or CFC, to act as a long-term line of credit to protect the cooperative's reliability efforts against higher inflation. CFC was

created for and is owned by the electric cooperatives in the U.S. and is a nonprofit finance cooperative that helps utilities like Butler Rural Electric Cooperative serve the needs of their members.



Tom Wolfenbarger
GENERAL MANAGER

#### Keeping your information safe

In 2022, electric cooperatives in Ohio developed the Rural Electric Cyber Advancement Program, or RECAP. This program helps co-ops assess their cybersecurity posture and identify areas of improvement. Butler Rural Electric Cooperative held its first RECAP in May 2023. This assessment helped the cooperative find areas of improvement so we can better secure our member information and our electric grid.

#### Improving reliability

In 2023, Duke Energy began work on its Ross Substation south of Millville. This work will improve transmission reliability for members served by our Colerain, Ross, Layhigh, Stillwell Beckett, Oxford, and Reily substations once finished. This includes members in Colerain, Fairfield, Hanover, Milford, Morgan, Oxford, Reily, Ross, and St. Clair townships.

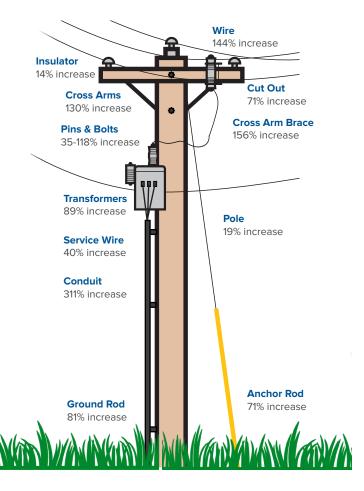
The project should be completed by 2025. Butler Rural Electric Cooperative is not funding the improvements. The cooperative supports the improvements because they will improve reliability for a large portion of our members.

We understand the cooperative would not exist without your support. We look forward to serving you in 2024. Thank you for your membership and continued trust in Butler Rural Electric Cooperative.

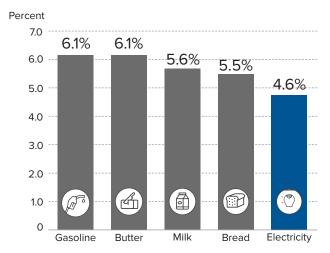
# HISTORY OF STABLE RATES

The cost of goods needed to deliver electricity to your home has risen over the last six years, when we last increased distribution rates. The graphic below shows the direct price increases from 2017 to 2023. As a not-for-profit utility, we must pass along rising costs to members.

Our 2023 rate increase resulted in a 2.7% average increase, which is significantly lower than the recent 10% increases from neighboring utilities.



#### Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2023



#### **ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE**

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many typical expenses, like medical care. Compared to the average increase of these expenses over the last five years, the value of electricity shines.



# **OVER \$2.8 MILLION**

#### IN TAXES PAID

Your cooperative is a not-for-profit utility. We return capital credits to members each year and paid nearly \$3 million in taxes in 2023, which directly benefited schools and services in your community.

#### A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD PRESIDENT

# Over \$1.5 million in capital credits retired to members

Unlike investor-owned utilities that maximize profits to pay shareholders, your not-for-profit cooperative provides electricity at cost. You receive capital credits because you're an owner of Butler Rural Electric Cooperative. Capital credits represent this ownership and are one of the most unique and rewarding benefits of being a co-op member.

At the end of each year, we subtract our operating expenses from the amount of money collected from members paying their electric bills. The money left is called margins. Your margins are based on the amount you paid for electric service and are deposited into your capital credits account at the end of the year. Butler Rural Electric Cooperative uses allocated margins to build and maintain our electric infrastructure by purchasing materials and equipment like poles and wires. These funds serve a vital function and allow the cooperative to operate economically and effectively while investing in the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our members.

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative's board of trustees evaluates the financial stability of the co-op each year to determine if we can retire capital credits. When the co-op retires capital credits, we withdraw margins from your capital credits account and send them to you as a check or as a credit on your bill. The capital credits amount you receive is based on the amount you paid for electric service during the years of capital credits retirement.

In November, members who received electricity from Butler Rural Electric Cooperative in 2006, 2007, and/or 2022 may have received a capital credits check or a credit on their electric bill.

Thank you for your investment in Butler Rural Electric Cooperative. Your support allows the co-op to continue to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electric service.



David Evans
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### New rates to fit your lifestyle

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative is working to create an electric vehicle charging rate. This rate incentivizes charging during the night, when electricity demand and wholesale energy rates are lower.

If you're not an EV user but like the incentives of a special rate, a time of day rate for other residential load will roll out simultaneously with the EV rate. We will share more information about these rates as they become available.

#### **Supporting your community**

We are committed to improving the quality of life in our community and invest in local youth through college scholarships and the annual Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. Members and employees donate to local non-profit organizations through Butler Rural Community Connection to benefit fire departments, emergency management services, and schools in the counties we serve. Members have donated over \$1.5 million to these organizations to improve our community.

All of us at Butler Rural Electric Cooperative look forward to serving you in 2024. The cooperative would not exist without your support. Thank you for your membership and continued trust in us.

# FOCUSED ON RELIABILITY



# **156** MILES OF TREES TRIMMED

Clearing trees and limbs from electric lines helps ensure you receive the power you depend on.



## **OVER \$1.3 MILLION**

# INVESTED IN TREE TRIMMING

This investment keeps lines clear and lineworkers safe during power restoration.



# **2,254** POLES INSPECTED

Near our Mill Substation, which serves members in Gratis, Somers, and Wayne townships.



#### **201** POLES REPLACED

A project completed by Butler Rural Electric Cooperative's lineworkers.

## RELIABLE ELECTRIC SERVICE

Our employees work around the clock to restore power when you need it most.

We invest over \$2 million every year in upgrades to our electric system and use the most effective power restoration technology, resulting in members having power 99.96% of the time.



MEMBERS HAVE POWER

99.96% OF THE TIME

# **INVESTING IN RELIABILITY**

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative invested over \$2 million in our electric system in 2023 to increase electric reliability and maintain existing facilities. One of the biggest projects included a new \$433,000 transformer for our Milford Substation, which serves members in Milford, Oxford, and Somers townships.

The new transformer increased the capacity of the substation from 12.5 megawatts to 20 megawatts. The increased capacity at the substation was identified as needed in the cooperative's long-range plan due to potential development in the area and provides additional backup capability. This project, along with additional equipment upgrades planned for 2025, will provide additional electric load capacity to the area east of Oxford.

The transformer previously used at our Milford Substation was moved to our West Alexandria Substation in Madison Township. The West Alexandria Substation serves members in Madison, German, and Wayne townships.

Our West Alexandria Substation received the transformer from our Milford Substation due to the deteriorating condition of West Alexandria Substation's transformer. We replaced the transformer with one of the same capacity so members continue to receive the electricity they depend on.

The cost to move the transformer from our Milford Substation to our West Alexandria Substation was \$22,000. Preparing the transformer for the move and pre-and-post move testing cost an additional \$14,500. Power to co-op members was not affected during the transitions because of investments in technology like supervisory control and data acquisition, or SCADA.

Investing in the cooperative's infrastructure also saved the expense of renting a transformer while the substation was offline. The cost of renting this type of equipment for long periods of time would have been astronomical, so previous investments resulted in considerable savings.

Thanks to long-term planning, the co-op is a leader in technology. Overloaded substations have a higher probability of reliability issues. Because Butler Rural Electric Cooperative owns 16 substations, you receive reliable power even when the demand for electricity increases.







# CLEAR + HELPFUL communication



#### FIBER IS COMING TO ALL MEMBERS!

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative's partnership with altafiber will bring high-speed, reliable fiber internet service to **all** cooperative members. To learn the proposed date for when your home will have access to fiber internet, visit butlerrural.coop > Community > Community Outreach > Fiber Internet to submit your address and contact information. A cooperative employee will contact you shortly after submitting the form.





Over 2,000 people attended this year's Family Day July 14. Members enjoy this free event as a thank you from us – the cooperative wouldn't exist without our members!



Butler Rural Electric Cooperative supports local county fairs and participates in 4-H livestock sales at the Butler and Preble County fairs.



In October, co-op employees participated in a Community Service Day at Indian Creek MetroPark in Reily and cleaned up honeysuckle and tree stumps around the park.

## **BUTLER RURAL COMMUNITY SOLAR**

The Butler Rural Community Solar program allows members to purchase subscriptions to solar panels. Subscribers support the benefits of solar energy without incurring upfront costs and without having solar panels located at their home. Generating energy with solar power creates no pollution or carbon dioxide emissions and is a clean and renewable energy source.

Our first community solar array is located on the corner of Lanes Mill and Stillwell Beckett roads across from our office. Construction for the 228 panel array was completed in February 2017. Our newest array was completed in July 2022 and is located in Findlay, Ohio. This larger array, built together with Ohio's Electric Cooperatives, had 342 panels available for our members.



In 2023, members fully subscribed to these additional panels, making the Butler Rural Community Solar arrays fully subscribed by members of the cooperative. The 570 solar panels allow cooperative members to support the benefits of solar energy without the cost and hassle of installing solar panels at their homes.



Employees showed their support during Breast Cancer Awareness Month and donated \$181 to Luna Cares, a non-profit organization in Oxford that supports the financial needs of women undergoing cancer treatment.



Open Hands Food Pantry in Hamilton, Camden Fish Food Pantry, and St. Aloysius Church in Shandon received items from our Holiday Harvest food drive this year.



Co-op employees enjoyed a Snow Day party with the residents and staff at Woodland Country Manor in December. Woodland Country Manor is a nursing facility that is a commercial member of Butler Rural Electric Cooperative.

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Trustees Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. Oxford, Ohio

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., which comprise the balance sheets as of September 30, 2023 and 2022, and the related statements of revenue and expenses, changes in member's equity, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements. In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., as of September 30, 2023 and 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America

and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### **Responsibility of Management for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Continued on next page

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT, CONT.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

#### Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Butler Rural

Electric Cooperative, Inc's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

- > Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.

#### Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated November 18, 2022 on our consideration of the Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

BHM CPA Group, Inc.

Circleville, Ohio November 14, 2023

# BALANCE SHEETS

September 30, 2023 and 2022

ASSETS		
Utility Plant	2023	2022
Electric plant in service	\$99,431,031	\$96,706,031
Construction work in progress	518,148	636,804
	99,949,179	97,342,835
Less: Accumulated provision for depreciation and amortization	(27,761,064)	(26,104,075)
NET UTILITY PLANT	72,188,115	71,238,760
Investments and Other Assets		
Investments in associated organizations	14,704,597	14,763,043
Investments in non utility property, net of accumulated	, - ,	,,-
depreciation of \$1,114,011 (\$1,027,760 for 2021)	403,619	397,307
Mortgage and notes receivable	147,765	223,243
Deferred charges	26,970	<u>49,380</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENTS AND OTHER ASSETS	15,282,951	15,432,973
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,791,487	3,407,833
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful		
accounts of \$12,065 (\$63,088 in 2021)	2,853,262	2,803,112
Accounts receivable – other	123,804	68,450
Notes receivable	64,290	81,135
Interest receivable	10,037	10,037
Materials and supplies	779,701	687,029
Other current and accrued assets	<u>2,140,572</u>	<u>1,495,538</u>
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>8,763,153</u>	<u>8,553,143</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$96,234,219	<u>\$95,224,867</u>

# BALANCE SHEETS

September 30, 2023 and 2022

# LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES

Equities	2023	2022
Patronage capital	\$42,272,087	\$42,620,406
Memberships	120,670	120,470
Other equities	116,020	116,020
TOTAL EQUITIES	42,508,777	42,856,896
Long-Term Liabilities		
Mortgage notes payable – CFC	712,606	831,068
Mortgage notes payable – FFB	35,429,231	33,417,524
Mortgage notes payable – CoBank	10,879,216	11,631,766
Accrued postretirement benefits	277,874	337,468
TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	47,298,927	46,217,826
Current Liabilities		
Current maturities of long-term debt	1,960,331	1,819,195
Accounts payable – purchased power	1,426,822	1,489,931
Accounts payable – other	591,410	424,042
Provision for pensions and benefits	45,900	51,000
Consumer deposits	88,137	112,331
Accrued taxes	1,228,836	1,160,228
Other current liabilities	1,085,079	1,093,418
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,426,515	<u>6,150,145</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES	96,234,219	95,224,867

# STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

#### For the Years Ended September 30, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
OPERATING REVENUES	\$35,710,564	\$36,161,762
Operating Expenses		
Cost of power	18,216,608	18,586,180
Transmission expense	26,183	58,478
Distribution expense – operations	3,025,882	2,775,042
Distribution expense – maintenance	3,096,354	2,381,897
Consumer accounts	678,527	722,152
Consumer service and information expense	696,072	813,309
Administrative and general	3,365,663	3,343,538
Maintenance of general plant	546,446	355,352
Depreciation of utility plant	2,815,880	2,827,353
Taxes	928,236	<u>962,856</u>
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>33,395,851</u>	<u>32,826,157</u>
OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE FIXED CHARGES	2,314,713	3,335,605
Interest on long-term debt	1,581,417	1,519,089
OPERATING MARGINS AFTER FIXED CHARGES	733,296	1,816,516
Capital credits	1,156,472	891,493
OPERATING MARGINS	1,889,768	2,708,009
Non-Operating Margins (Expense)		
Interest income	186,618	58,715
Other income (expense)	57,853	(32,680)
TOTAL NON-OPERATING MARGINS	244,471	26,035
NET MARGINS FOR PERIOD	\$2,134,239	\$2,734,044

# STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN MEMBERS' EQUITY

For the Years Ended September 30, 2023 and 2022

	PATRONAGE CAPITAL				
	Assignable	Assigned	<u>Total</u>	Memberships	Other Equities
Balance, October 1, 2021	\$2,486,863	\$40,001,605	\$42,488,468	\$119,970	\$116,020
Net margins for year Assignment of prior year's	2,734,044	_	2,734,044	_	_
patronage capital	(3,254,411)	3,254,411	_	_	_
Change in membership	_	_	_	500	_
Capital credits reassigned	122,924	_	122,924	_	_
Retirement of patronage capital	=	(2,725,030)	(2,725,030)		
Balance, September 30, 2022	2,089,420	40,530,986	42,620,406	120,470	116,020
Net margins for year Assignment of prior year's	2,134,239	-	2,134,239	_	-
patronage capital	(3,039,399)	3,039,399	_	_	_
Change in membership	-	_	_	200	_
Capital credits reassigned	128,591	_	128,591	_	_
Retirement of patronage capital		(2,611,149)	(2,611,149)		
Balance, September 30, 2023	\$1,312,851	\$40,959,236	\$42,272,087	\$120,670	\$116,020

# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Years Ended September 30, 2023 and 2022

## CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
Net margins	\$2,134,239	\$2,734,044
Adjustments to reconcile net margins to net		
cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	3,374,274	3,440,571
Noncash capital credits	(1,156,472)	(891,493)
Loss on disposition of property	(20,693)	8,405
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Accounts, notes and other receivables (net)	(13,181)	69,956
Materials and supplies	(92,672)	(87,525)
Other assets	(645,034)	(968,016)
Deferred charges	(20,311)	2,134,717
Accounts payable	104,259	131,436
Accrued taxes and other liabilities	60,269	(240,416)
Consumer deposits	(24,194)	(11,396)
Accrued postretirement benefits	<u>(64,694)</u>	<u>(11,865)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	3,635,790	6,308,418

## CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

Extension and replacement of plant, net of	2023	2022
salvage and removal costs	(4,175,287)	(6,291,458)
Proceeds from disposition of property	12,849	12,732
Investment in nonutility property	(104,089)	(122,886)
Proceeds from redemption of capital credits	<u>1,214,918</u>	1,318,870
Net cash used by investing activities	(3,051,609)	(5,082,742)

# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Years Ended September 30, 2023 and 2022

## CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
Proceeds from long-term debt	3,205,000	4,275,000
Payments on long-term debt	(1,923,169)	(1,899,097)
Proceeds and reclassifications of patronage		
capital and memberships (net)	128,791	123,424
Patronage capital credits retired	(2,611,149)	(2,725,030)
Net cash provided by financing activities	(1,200,527)	(225,703)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(616,346)	999,973
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>3,407,833</u>	2,407,860
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	\$2,791,487	<u>\$3,407,833</u>

