



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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www.rollinghills.coop

ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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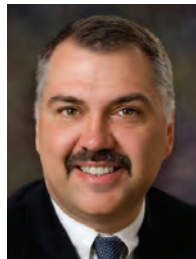
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FROM THE MANAGER

Making Positive Impact on Community, Earth ‘Cooperatively’



Doug Jackson

On April 22, we mark the 50th anniversary of the original Earth Day event that mobilized 20 million Americans and became a catalyst for individuals and businesses

to rethink, reinvent and recycle for the benefit of people and our planet.

Cooperatives across the country have led the electric utility industry in actively expanding their fuel portfolios to include an array of renewable sources while educating their consumer-members on best practices in reducing energy use.

Co-ops have been using clean, renewable hydropower for more than 75 years. In addition to the roughly 10 gigawatts of hydropower purchased from federally-run dams, co-ops have developed an additional 692 megawatts of hydropower with 724 co-ops in 43 states using hydro as a source of power.

Solar’s flexible and scalable abilities have prompted co-ops to triple their solar capacity in the last three years. In Kansas alone, both generation and transmission cooperatives that supply power to the 27 distribution coopera-

tives including Rolling Hills, have or will soon have solar included in their power supply mix. Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) began commercial operation of its Prairie Sky Solar Farm in 2017, and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, at press time, was nearing completion of the Johnson Corner Solar Project. In addition, several electric co-ops serving Kansans have invested in their own solar power.

A drive in either direction of the Sunflower State showcases the expansion of wind energy. In fact, since the beginning of 2008, wind generating capacity in Kansas has more than tripled, making Kansas one of the top five states in the nation. Nationally, wind development has surged in the last 10 years and is now second only to hydro in the co-op’s renewable portfolio.

Rolling Hills Electric also educates you, our consumer-members, on ways to reduce your energy use, helping you help the environment.

There are many ways we can help the environment, and some are easier than you’d think. Here are a few simple actions you can take now to reduce your energy use.

Audit your lightbulbs. Swapping out any remaining bulbs with LED bulbs can

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NOTICE

Cold Weather Rule Extended

Due to the pandemic novel coronavirus, Rolling Hills Electric is extending its Cold Weather Rule until May 1, 2020.

OPERATIONS UPDATE Tree Trimming



Marc Martin

The crews continue to perform tree trimming and brush clearing in the rights-of-way throughout the service territory. Other activities across our territory include service upgrades and pole replacements.

Meter changeouts are complete in the Osborne area and are proceeding to the Ellsworth District. The anticipated completion of meter changeouts is late spring or early summer, pending unforeseen circumstances, such as weather.

TODD EITZMANN has transferred from Beloit to the Belleville outpost effective in March. **RILEY MOORE**, an apprentice lineman has been hired to fill a vacancy in Belleville. Filling two line crew vacancies in Beloit are **CASEY SMITH** and **TYLER BAILEY**. Rolling Hills welcomes them to our family.

WATT'S HAPPENING

New AMI Meters Help Us Help You



Linnea Beebe

Rolling Hills Electric invested in new meters called Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) technology. These meters provide many features

and information vital to both the operations department and lineworkers.

For example, a tree branch hits a power line causing an outage. A neighbor down the road loses power and reports the outage. As the outage is being entered into the Outage Management System (OMS), the system already knows that there are 11 other meters out in that same area. The dispatcher contacts the on-call lineman. The lineman brings up the outage on the tablet, reviews the outage map, reads caller comments and already has a keen idea of what area to proceed to.

Also, with the new meters, service to the meter can be connected or disconnected from the office rather than sending a lineman to set or

remove a meter. This allows the linemen to stay on task with their scheduled projects and reduces expenses for the cooperative.

During cold weather, we do not disconnect service on delinquent accounts due to abiding by the Cold Weather Rule. We do restrict service to 10 amps, enough to provide heat to the home on severely delinquent accounts.

Due to the pandemic novel coronavirus, Rolling Hills Electric is extending its Cold Weather Rule until May 1, 2020. Delinquent accounts not paid by the due date on the green delinquent notice will be subject to disconnect without further notice. Collection and reconnect fees will be applied and must be paid in addition to the full past due balance.

Payments may be placed in the night drops at Ellsworth, Mankato, Belleville and Beloit. Payments may be made by debit or credit card or by electronic check using the "SmartHub Login" or "Make a One-Time Payment" on our website at www.rollinghills.coop. You may also call the office during regular business hours and we will assist you. There is no fee!



Remember to #ThankALineworker on April 13

Line workers serve on the frontlines of our nation's energy needs, and on April 13, 2020, Rolling Hills Electric, along with other electric cooperatives across the country, will honor the brave men and women who work hard to keep the lights on.

Line crews work around the clock, sometimes in difficult and dangerous conditions, to keep power flowing to our local communities. Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical infrastructure to our electric system, lineworkers are at the heart of our co-op.

When a storm hits, they set aside their personal priorities because Mother Nature doesn't work around holidays, vacations and birthdays. A service-oriented mentality is one of the many admirable characteristics of an electric line worker.

Rolling Hills Electric is proud to honor the 27 line workers who maintain 6,447 miles of power lines in our service territory.

Rolling Hills Electric invites all co-op members to take a moment and thank a line worker for the important work they do. On April 13, you can use

#ThankALineworker on social media to show your support for these brave men and women who power our lives:

- ▶ **ADAM BADGER** – Beloit
- ▶ **JOHN BAILEY** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **TYLER BAILEY** – Beloit
- ▶ **GORDON BLUE** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **CRAIG CLARK** – Beloit
- ▶ **TODD EITZMANN** – Belleville
- ▶ **DOUG ERREBO** – Beloit
- ▶ **BRIAN FALK** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **STEVE HABIGER** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **MAX HULBERT** – Beloit
- ▶ **J.R. HYNEK** – Beloit
- ▶ **CREGG JEFFERY** – Beloit
- ▶ **KYLE MCGREEVY** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **RILEY MOORE** – Belleville
- ▶ **RODNEY PAYNE** – Beloit
- ▶ **CLAY PICKEL** – Beloit
- ▶ **JERRY ROESTI** – Beloit
- ▶ **TYLER ROESTI** – Ellsworth
- ▶ **BEN RUTHSTROM** – Osborne
- ▶ **BOB SASSER** – Belleville
- ▶ **CASEY SMITH** – Beloit
- ▶ **SCOTT SPLICHAL** – Belleville
- ▶ **KENDALL STRUTT** – Belleville
- ▶ **KYLE STRUTT** – Osborne
- ▶ **JERRY WEBB** – Beloit
- ▶ **TRENT WEBB** – Osborne
- ▶ **JUSTIN YORK** – Osborne

Making Positive Impact on Community, Earth 'Cooperatively'

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make a big difference in home efficiency, and it's one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bill.


Maintain your HVAC system. Replace your home air filters to allow your HVAC system to run more efficiently. Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Changing the filters makes your unit run more efficiently — keeping your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Examine your smart or programmable thermostat. Make sure it is programmed for the current season and family schedule. This is one of the best tools at your fingertips, however, you

can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

Seal windows and doors. Seal leaks with weather stripping and caulk to keep cool air indoors during warm months and prevent cold air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and increase efficiency.

As we celebrate Earth Day this April, let's continue to work together and make a positive impact on our local community, the Sunflower State — and our beautiful planet.



10 REASONS WE APPRECIATE LINEWORKERS

Although we appreciate each and every co-op employee, it takes a special kind of person to be an electric lineworker. Here are the top 10 reasons we appreciate our lineworkers.

- 10 They are specially trained to work on power lines and related equipment.
- 9 They are dedicated to safely and efficiently restoring power following weather or outages.
- 8 They work overtime, many holidays and get up in the middle of the night to help restore power.
- 7 They enjoy serving our communities.
- 6 They aren't afraid of heights.
- 5 They help other electric co-ops with major outages at a moment's notice.
- 4 They lend their talents in many ways, including educating the public about electrical safety.
- 3 They have each other's backs.
- 2 They are trained to work safely on both dead and live power lines.
- 1 We couldn't provide excellent service without them or any of our other dedicated employees.



Manager Doug Jackson poses with Jarek Meyer (left) and Reagan Bales (right) following the awarding of the Youth Tour and Leadership Camp trips. Congratulations to each of these young men.

Youth Tour and Camp Winners

On Sunday, February 16 interviews were held with the top two youth competing for summer trips and scholarships.

REAGAN BALES, son of Larry and Robin Bales, Smith Center, finished with the top score after the interview. He selected the Cooperative Leadership Camp to be held at Camp Eden near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in July. He will also receive a \$500 scholarship to the college of choice after high school.

JAREK MEYER, son of Jeffrey and Dawn Meyer, Athol, accepted the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., this June. He will also receive a \$500 scholarship to a college or trade school after high school.

We invite both students to attend our annual meeting this year and come back in 2021 to report to the membership about their trip experiences.

WASHINGTON, D.C., WINNER – YOUTH TOUR ESSAY

Democratic Member Control

Farmers and ranchers formed electric cooperatives more than seventy-five years ago, not to make a profit, but to obtain the services that would better the lives of those living in rural areas. These cooperatives are based on seven cooperative principles, with democratic member control being the most important. Without member control, you cannot have a cooperative. You would simply have a company trying to make a profit without the member's best interests in mind.

By purchasing electricity through the cooperative, you become a member and have the right to vote. Every member has the opportunity and the right to voice their opinion. Within the cooperative, not every member will agree on what needs to be done. If someone is unhappy with the decisions the directors and trustees are making, they have the right to try and make a change. Just like in our government where people vote to decide who will represent their interests and needs the best, cooperative members have the opportunity to do the same. Members also vote to set policies and make decisions.

Unlike cooperatives, with investor-owned utility companies, cus-

tomers have no voice in policymaking. These companies are owned by shareholders, and a person's voting power is based on how many shares he or she owns. Any profits are given back to shareholders or are reinvested. The profits are not given to the customers. The investor-owned utility company's intent is to make a profit, not to work for the members. This is what makes cooperatives unique. In a cooperative, the members are the owners. Each member gets one vote, and any profits are returned to the members over time in the form of capital credits.

A major change that members of Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative recently voted on was relocating the cooperative headquarters from Mankato to Beloit. There was a lot of discussion regarding this issue at the annual meeting. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and express their opinions at the meeting. Around the same time members also voted to limit the number of years the trustees and directors could serve. The term limits provide an opportunity for other members to be elected to a board position and to propose changes that they think are appropriate. These

are examples of the democratic process in action.

Although the other cooperative principles are important, such as members' economic participation, and being autonomous and independent these principles could not function properly without democratic member control. Economic decisions would be difficult to make without the voting process. Directors and trustees play an important role when making financial decisions and forming agreements with other organizations. The members still have an important role, because the members elect the directors and trustees.

Without democratic member control, the organization would not be a cooperative, but it would be a for-profit business. Electric cooperatives were formed seventy-five years ago in order to help rural communities. With the help of members, cooperatives can serve the members not only now, but for the next seventy-five years and beyond.



Jarek Meyer, Athol