



## ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

### Rolling Hills Electric Co-op, Inc.

#### Board of Trustees

**Bob Fredrickson**, President  
Ellsworth – District 1

**Paul Wilson**, Vice-President  
Burr Oak – District 2

**Justin Trost**, Secretary  
Concordia – District 3

**John George**, Treasurer  
Lebanon – District 2

**Eric Andersen**, Trustee  
Jamestown – District 3

**Michelle Brokes**, Trustee  
Wilson – District 1

**Mike Brzon**, Trustee  
Courtland – District 3

**Corey Dlabal**, Trustee  
Wilson – District 1

**David Dubbert**, Trustee  
Beloit – District 2

**Tom Marr**, Trustee  
Formoso – District 2

#### Staff

**Douglas Jackson** General Manager

#### Contact Us

3075B U.S. Hwy. 24 P.O. Box 339  
Beloit, KS 67420  
785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572

#### Like us on Facebook

On Facebook, search for “Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.” and like our page for continued updates, energy efficiency tips, cooperative news and outage updates.



## Employees Recognized for Years of Service

Rolling Hills’ annual Christmas dinner was held on Nov. 24, 2020, at the Beloit office. Directors and employees celebrated employees’ longevity with the co-op and awards were presented.



**Scott Splichal**, journeyman lineman, has been with Rolling Hills for 20 years.



**Jerry Roessti** (left), foreman, celebrates 20 years of service with Manager **Doug Jackson**.



**Trent Webb**, journeyman lineman, displays his certificate for 10 years of service.

### There is no such thing as 100% safe ice.

You can't judge the strength of ice by its age, thickness, air temperature or its appearance.

#### Strength is based on all these factors, plus:

- ▶ the depth of water under the ice,
- ▶ size of the water body,
- ▶ water chemistry and currents,
- ▶ the distribution of the load on the ice, and
- ▶ local climatic conditions.



Brought to you by the  
electric cooperatives of Kansas.

## Winter Weather Can Bring Power Lines Down

### Stay Where You Are

You've just been in an accident involving a downed power line. Your first instinct might be to get out and run, but that could cost you your life. In most cases, the safest place to be is inside your vehicle. Wait until electric utility workers de-energize the power. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, escape as safely as possible by jumping out without touching the vehicle and hopping away with both feet together as far as you can. Warn others not to approach the scene.

### You Should Know:

- ▶ Downed power lines are extremely dangerous and even deadly.
- ▶ Electric current can travel through the ground and anything touching the ground.
- ▶ Stray voltage spreads like ripples on a pond.
- ▶ If you step from one "ripple" (voltage) to another, you could be electrocuted.
- ▶ Downed lines could be hiding under standing water, ice or debris.



## Rolling Hills Hires Kraus and Mellies

**LOREN KRAUS** joined the Rolling Hills Electric family in October 2020, filling the IT specialist position that had been vacant for several months. His previous job was with Citizens Medical Center in Colby.

Kraus was raised in the WaKeeney area. He and his wife, Vonna, have two children, five grandchildren and another on the way. He is active in his church, enjoys college sports, playing a little pickup game of basketball when he gets the opportunity, and woodworking projects.

**CATIE MELLIES** has recently joined the Rolling Hills Electric family taking on the member services position. She comes to us from Central Valley Ag, a local agricultural cooperative within the area and has nine-plus years of cooperative knowledge and experience.

She grew up in the Clay Center/Wakefield area and has lived in the Beloit area for the past nine years. She graduated from Kansas State University (Go Cats!) with a degree in agribusiness.

She and her husband, Nic, have two boys (Trey, 5, and Walker, 1 ½), and a dog, Bella. Mellies is an avid crafter in her spare time and also enjoys time spent boating on Waconda lake, fishing and spending time with family.



Loren Kraus



Catie Mellies

## Time to Ditch Your Old Space Heater?

If you can't remember when you purchased your space heater, it might be time to replace it. Just as the flip phones of yesteryear have progressed into today's modern cellphone, portable space heaters have come a long way too. Most of today's models have built-in safety features, such as non-exposed coils and sensors that detect overheating or touch, as well as an automatic shut-off feature in case it gets tipped over.

Regardless of whether your space heater is fresh out of the box or several years old, it should be used safely. Most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve using one, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires, right behind cooking.

Along with using a unit that is in good working order, be sure to keep clothing, papers, rugs and other flammable items at least 3 feet away from a space heater. More than half of the heating-related home fires start when items are too close to the heat source,

according to the NFPA, including upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

Safe Electricity and Rolling Hills Electric recommend these space heater safety tips:

- ▶ Read all instructions and only use as recommended.
- ▶ Do not leave a space heater unattended.
- ▶ Plug it directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater cycling on and off.
- ▶ Unplug any other item from the outlet you are using; also try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
- ▶ Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- ▶ Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ▶ Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
- ▶ Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.

Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for more safety tips.



# The Time Has Come



Linnea Beebe

Where do I start? I began my career with Smoky Hill Electric in Ellsworth in March 1999. I started out as a customer service representative at the front desk

calculating electricity bills, accepting payments and new service or service transfers. That position also included working in the RadioShack store, activating bag cellphones for Kansas Cellular then Alltel. How many of you remember the bag phones? I had the pleasure of installing a few of those in the Ellsworth Farmers Co-op equipment. Smoky Hill also provided satellite TV, later DirecTV and internet service. As time passed, Alltel and DirecTV decided to move the business to larger communities. RadioShack was experiencing financial difficulties competing with online businesses, such as Amazon.

In January 2008, I filled the open position in member services. I began training for this position during the November 2007 ice storm. None of us will forget that for a very long time. Some residences were without electricity for nearly two weeks. Approximately 90 linemen, including mutual aid crews from Arkansas, Mississippi and elsewhere arrived at the Ellsworth shop every morning by 7 to grab a sack lunch then head to their designated location. I do not want to jinx Rolling Hills Electric, but I did happen to mention a few times that I didn't want to see another ice storm before I retire. Everyone worked together and most of our members were very understanding

of the situation. None of us want to be without electricity but we are at the mercy of Mother Nature.

In July of 2016, the office personnel from Mankato, Belleville and Ellsworth all relocated to the new corporate office in Beloit. It was almost like going to work for a new employer. I kind of knew the employees from the other offices but not really. Today, I feel that I have worked with some of them forever. I continue to have members and friends ask if I am tired of the commute from Ellsworth to Beloit. Honestly, it hasn't been that bad. We've been blessed with decent weather all but a few times. The scenery is beautiful and who can complain about that!

This will be my final centerspread in the *Kansas Country Living* magazine as my retirement date is Jan. 5, 2021. I have enjoyed visiting with many of you over the phone, in person, by text, email or Facebook. I am looking forward to retirement although I will miss working for an awesome cooperative with dedicated employees and a board who want nothing but the best for the members. I want to thank the management, board, and employees for their friendship and support over the past nearly 22 years.

Catie Mellies will be filling the position of member services. She has more than nine years of cooperative knowledge and will do an outstanding job. She and I have been working closely since she joined the Rolling Hills family. I look forward to following her and Rolling Hills Electric in future centerspreads of the *Kansas Country Living* magazine.

In closing, I wish each of you a safe, healthy, and Happy New Year 2021!

**Congratulations, Linnea! Rolling Hills wishes you the best in your retirement. Thank you for your dedication to the cooperative family the last 22 years.**

# Updates from the Operations Department



Marc Martin, Operations Manager

Rolling Hills Electric has been fortunate so far this winter with no ice storms, heavy snow or muddy roads in our service territories. The moisture would be appreciated though.

Our crews continue pole replacements on the Bellaire substation system. In addition, we are replacing our load control system over the winter and early spring. This system will be in place by the end of May.

Maintenance within the City of Kanopolis continues in preparation to make system upgrades at the Kanopolis substation and the city system.

If there are planned outages, Rolling Hills will attempt to contact you by phone. If your primary contact number has changed, please call 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572 to verify or update a contact number. Rolling Hills also uses Facebook to notify members of planned or unplanned outages.

There have been questions about whether to report an outage or to let the system alert Rolling Hills. We strongly encourage all outages be reported in the event you are an isolated outage. Your neighbor may have power, but for some reason, you have no power. We want to get your outage restored while the crew is in the area.

We also encourage you to register your account on SmartHub. You can verify if Rolling Hills is experiencing an outage affecting you and when service is restored, but please report your outage. If you should have any questions or concerns at all, call this office. Your call is always welcome.

# 2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family’s monthly bills — and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



## JANUARY

Take short showers instead of baths.



## FEBRUARY

Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.

## MARCH

Turn off lights when you leave a room.



## APRIL

Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to shade your home in the summer.

## MAY

Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.

## JUNE

Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.



## JULY

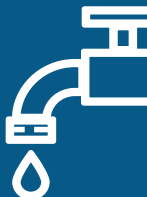
Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

## AUGUST

Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the HVAC filter every 60-90 days.

## SEPTEMBER

Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.



## OCTOBER

Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.

## NOVEMBER

Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.



## DECEMBER

Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.