

**ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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For outage
updates,
energy
efficiency
tips and cooperative news.



OPERATIONS UPDATE

Rolling Hills Restores Power Safely and Efficiently

We do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it — power outages occasionally happen.

For most members, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms, like the Dec. 15, 2021, wind storm or 2021's Winter Storm Uri impact our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So, when the power goes out, how do crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? It all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the main distribution lines that service a large number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and homes are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. Rolling Hills Electric keeps a supply of utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of infrastructure damage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations.

We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see our crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood or area. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself by calling 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572 or through the Smart Hub portal or phone app.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Rolling Hills Electric, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.



Marc Martin
Operations Manager

Weather Damage in Rolling Hills' Service Territory

On March 22, the Osborne and Rooks county service area on the Covert substation received significant damage from high winds, snow and ice which caused many downed power lines and broken poles in the area. This meant extended outages for some of our members. There were approximately 100 poles damaged by the storm. Crews worked diligently and had most residential services restored by the following day and all residential services restored by end of the day on March 24.

On March 29, the Burr Oak service territory area suffered a large grass fire where it left a line section without power overnight. Approximately 35 poles were lost due to fire and extreme winds. These poles had to be replaced to get power restored and crews were able to do that by end of the following day. Our hearts are with all of those affected by these fires.

We cannot thank our members enough for your patience and understanding during these difficult times allowing our linemen to work



These pictures taken in the Covert substation area are about eight hours apart. There were approximately 30 poles down on this section of line that needed to be replaced. Kudos to our crews who work hard to get power restored to our members as quickly as possible!

safely to restore power. Also, a big thank you to our crews who were out working in the harsh and dangerous conditions, working long hours to restore power to our members.

Always report outages, dimming/ blinking lights, or damaged equipment

by calling 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572 or through the Smart Hub portal or phone app no matter what time of day or night! Either office staff or the after-hours call center will take your information to relay to our linemen to get power restored as fast as they can.



Gordon Blue served our members for 40 years and retired recently — a well deserved retirement!

Happy Retirement, Gordon!



Employee Profile

GORDON BLUE

Meet Gordon Blue. A native of Alma, Kansas, Gordon came to Smoky Hill in December, 1981, after graduating from the NCK Area Lineman's School, Manhattan. He enjoys fishing, hunting, & riding his 3-wheel cycle.

Congratulations and happy retirement to **GORDON BLUE!** After 40 years as a journeyman lineman at Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc., Blue has decided to hang up the hooks. We will miss you, Gordon.

Enjoy your retirement!

An article on Blue from the Smoky Hill newsletter in May 1984.

2022 Youth Leadership Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2022 Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **JAKOB SASSE** and **REBECCA FINNEY!**

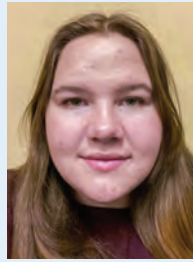
Rolling Hills Electric's strong tradition of promoting youth leadership continues offering these winners all-expenses-paid leadership programs this summer. Winners were selected based upon application data, a written essay, and scores on an open-book electric cooperative exam.

Unfortunately, the 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., was canceled due to ongoing concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), our statewide association, decided to continue the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp trip in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, as well as hold the Kansas Electric Youth (KEY) Leadership Conference in Topeka.

Sasse is the son of Darren and Heather Sasse of Smith Center. He attends Smith Center Jr./Sr. High School and plans to study physical therapy. He will attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in July near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. High school students from electric cooperative



Jakob Sasse



Rebecca Finney

communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming participate in this leadership camp. Together, they will create a candy cooperative, hear from dynamic speakers, and raft down the Colorado River.

Finney is the daughter of Mike and MaryJane Finney of Beloit. Rebecca attends Beloit Jr./Sr. High School and plans to study history at Kansas State University. Finney will attend the KEY Leadership Conference that will be held in Topeka in June and will provide leadership learning opportunities, engaging speakers and team-building activities. Student leaders from across the state will tour the Kansas State Capitol and other local attractions. Those selected for this experience also can apply for the Kansas seat on a national youth leadership council.

Rolling Hills Electric's scholarship program also provides a \$500 scholarship to each winner upon completion of the designated trip.

What a great group of young people we have representing Rolling Hills Electric! We wish them much success as they enter their senior year in high school and soon begin their college education.

2022 YOUTH TOUR WINNER

What is the Most Important Cooperative Principle? BY JAKOB SASSE

Today I will tell you my thoughts on why Concern for Community is the best of the Seven Cooperative Principles. Everyone needs to be a part of the development of the community. It is important that everyone has a say in the decisions that are being made. Some reasons I find it to be the most important of the seven are safety, money saving, jobs and scholarships.

The first reason why I find Concern for Community is the best is because of safety. On the Rolling Hills Electric webpage it states many ways that you can stay safe around power lines. It also shows how to prepare for a storm and what steps to take if your electricity goes out. This shows that they want the best for their community and since it is a cooperative, it also has capital credits. This leads me to my next reason.

As adults, saving some money is always nice for you and or the community. Having concern for the community the cooperative made it a non-profit business, which resulted in capital credits. Capital credits are the margins credited to the members of the cooperative based on their purchases from the cooperative the previous year. This means that the cooperative can pay for any remaining expenses they have had in the past year without taking from the employees' salaries. Just think there are over 900 of these non-profit, member owned electric corporations in America. They provide electricity to 42 million people in 47 states. That's a lot of jobs to fill. Which helps people keep their jobs and build strong communities.

Youth competing for the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp and Kansas Electric Youth Leadership Conference were asked to write an essay on "Which of the Seven Cooperative Principles do you think is most important, and why?"

Everyone needs a job. In a small community like mine sometimes it is hard to find a good paying job with sustainable hours for a working family. Rolling Hills Cooperative provides opportunities to people throughout many communities within our area. They offer these jobs with competitive pay and more importantly, benefits also. Employees aren't the only ones who receive benefits — Rolling Hills provides scholarships to the youth of the community also.

Continued on page 12D ►

What is the Most Important Cooperative Principle?

Continued from page 12C ▶

The scholarships that Rolling Hills provides are just astonishing. Just getting top two in this test and essay will automatically give you a \$500 scholarship. That is a lot of money for a student that might not have a lot. This program can open a student's eyes to college because of the money he or she can be given. These scholarships can change a kid's life for the better because they did not grow up with a lot. On top of that, Rolling Hills offers this amazing deal to go to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to a youth leadership camp. That could very much mean a lot to a family that does not have the money to take their children on trips and vacations. Studies show that when kids go on trips and vacations, they feel more loved and supported in life.

In conclusion, I hope that I was able to show you how Concern for Community is the best of the Seven Cooperative Principles. Rolling Hills covers a large area and their concern for the communities within that area is a priority in my eyes. It is made a priority by providing safety tips, being non-profit, providing jobs and including the youth. Thank you for this opportunity.

2022 YOUTH TOUR RUNNER UP

What is the Most Important Cooperative Principle?

BY REBECCA FINNEY

As long as I have been alive, my family has been heavily involved in a cooperative called the Beloit Buyers Food Club (BBFC). While this co-op is locally run and not a legally recognized institution, it still follows the definition of a cooperative. A cooperative is a system that involves mutual assistance in working toward a common goal. This co-op works to get people food/ingredients that are not locally produced or distributed. One thing that has taken a serious toll on the running of this cooperative is the dwindling number of members. Cooperatives are people-oriented, member-owned institutions that are run by and for the members. When a cooperative is lacking members, its functioning and efficiency significantly decrease. That is why I believe the most important cooperative principle is principle one: Voluntary and Open Membership.

The most important thing in a cooperative is its members. Cooperatives must have members who volunteer. They must be willing to actively participate and be involved with the community they serve and the members they work with. Membership must be voluntary so that only those who are absolutely willing to spend time and effort in the cooperative get a chance to work in one. I believe that open membership is crucial because there needs to be a chance for everyone to be involved. This allows equal opportunity for every person. However, Voluntary and Open Membership must go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other. While it must be open for everyone, only those who show interest and volunteer should have a position. With the BBFC, people who might only show up to order and pick up their food would cause actual members to carry an undue burden. Therefore, only involved members of the club are allowed to order on a long-term basis.

One might rebut my statements and say that voluntary and open membership would allow for people to take and overrun the cooperative. It could allow for a group of members who disagree about how the cooperative is run to completely change the identity of the co-op. I don't disagree, as it is definitely a possibility; however, that is why it is also necessary to have the other six cooperative principles. Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Between Co-ops; and Concern for Community are all pivotal to the leading and running of a cooperative.

Democratic Member Control is needed to make fair decisions, Member Economic Participation is needed so those who contribute time and money also receive compensation, and Autonomy And Independence are needed so members join because of their own volition and not because they were forced. Education, Training and Information are a must because members need to know how to involve themselves and participate in the cooperative. Cooperation Among Co-ops is needed because to effectively serve members, co-ops must work together on local, regional, national and even international levels. Finally, Concern for the Community is needed to maintain and develop the community the co-op serves.

All seven of the principles must work together and be equally implemented to have a successful cooperative. Nonetheless, because of my experience with the BBFC, I believe voluntary and open membership is the most important principle because you cannot have a cooperative without people who are willing to be members involved with the cooperative and with each other.

