

**ROLLING HILLS  
ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.**

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**Jason Rabe,**  
CEO/General Manager

**CONTACT US**

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For outage updates,  
energy efficiency tips and  
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**FROM THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER**

## Potential For Blackouts, Now What?

### Part II: Reversing potential threats to the electric grid

Last month, I laid out the growing fragility of our electric grid and threat of rolling blackouts during peak load seasons. This month we will explore some of the trends, outcomes and action steps to reverse these trends.

In the world of electric generation, there are sources that are considered firm generation (nuclear, hydro and natural gas) and sources that are considered intermittent (wind and solar). Both source types have a role in our grid and have inherent advantages/disadvantages.

For the last two decades, the focus has been on decarbonizing our energy production — a noble idea with positive sentiments. However, as with most

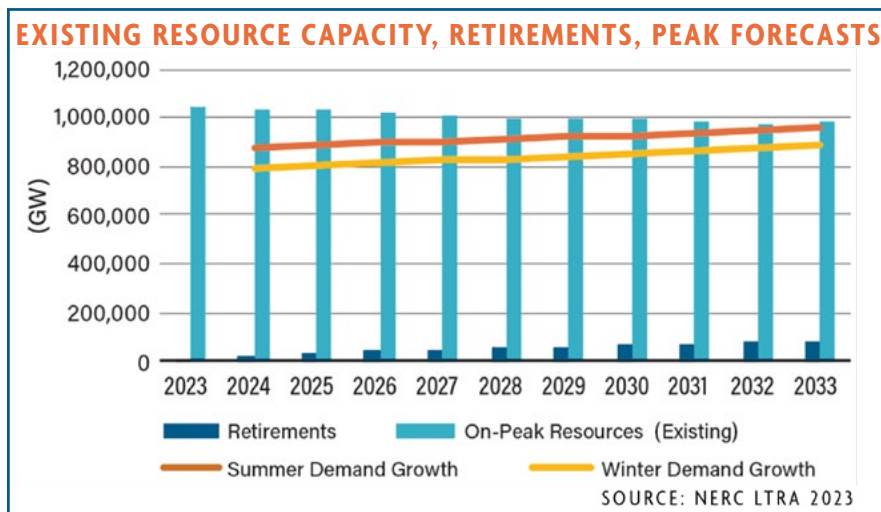
pendulum-based decisions, we may have swung too far in one direction and created a major weakness in our power grid — we do not have enough firm, readily-available generation to meet the growing needs of our nation. This doesn't mean there isn't the capability to produce sufficient energy, it just means it isn't able to be produced exactly when it is needed — therein lies the crux of the issue.

The chart from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's



**Jason Rabe**

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## Payne Retires After Nearly 37 Years at Rolling Hills



**LEFT:** Rodney Payne (left) accepts a certificate from CEO/General Manager Jason Rabe. **RIGHT:** Payne's retirement was celebrated with Rolling Hills' staff and guests on May 9.

**RODNEY PAYNE** finished May 1 knowing it would be his last “working” day at Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative. He will be greatly missed, but we know he is ready for that next step in life.

Payne is no stranger to our area, while growing up south of Formoso, he attended grade school through high school at Mankato before attending the vo-tech college in Beloit. Before starting his career at Rolling Hills in 1987, he worked at Weber Implement and also Randall Co-op.

He started his career at Rolling Hills in 1987 as a tree trimmer and worked his

way up to journeyman lineman before advancing to operation assistant in 2016.

His proudest accomplishment is making it just shy of 37 years without a lost-time accident. That is a long time in this line of work — Payne has shown many others how it's done right! The best advice he has for his peers is to communicate with each other and work safely, no matter what, and also be sure to enjoy it because time goes by quickly.

Since Payne now has more time, he is looking forward to spending it with family, including his wife, Linda, his two grown children, and growing

grandchildren. He will be hard at work getting his golf game back as well! He also looks forward to more time to farm, ranch, travel, ride his motorcycle, hunt, play pool and follow his grandkids to their many sport activities.

Payne said he will miss his co-workers and all the wonderful, friendly members. When speaking at his retirement party, Payne said he would like to thank everyone for “putting up with me over the years and I hope to see you all in the near future.”

Thank you, Rodney, for your many years of service and cheers to retirement!

## BROKES EARNS BOARD LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE

RHEC Board President **MICHELLE BROKES** recently received the Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of cooperative principles and business model. Electric co-ops in Kansas have a commitment to work through Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., our statewide association, to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The BLC recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director. Directors who have attained the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

Congratulations on this achievement and thank you for your dedication to RHEC.



**Michelle Brokes (left)** accepts her Board Leadership Certificate from CEO/General Manager Jason Rabe.



# 2024 RHEC Annual Meeting Summary

The Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting was held Friday, April 19, 2024, at the Beloit Headquarters with 175 members and guests in attendance. The evening kicked off by members registering for prizes and receiving a gift, a nifty magnetic bowl with the RHEC logo. A delicious meal was provided by Vathauer Catering, Clay Center, and served by our very own linemen.

The meeting started off with presentations from each of the previous year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour winners, **THAD DONLEY** and **AUBREY GENGLER**.

The first half of the door prizes were drawn before the business meeting was convened by Board President Michelle Brokes. She began by presenting the president's report which was followed by Jason Rabe, CEO/general manager, with the manager's and financial reports.

We welcomed Senator Dinah Sykes for a brief question and answer session. Guest speakers Mark Barbee, senior vice president of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Rolling Hills Electric's power supplier; and Lee Tafanelli, CEO of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., addressed the membership as well.

The evening ended as President Brokes announced

## BOARD ELECTION RESULTS



**Sarah Goss**  
District 1



**Paul Wilson**  
District 2



**Justin Trost**  
District 3

the voting results reelecting **SARAH GOSS**, District 1; **PAUL WILSON**, District 2; and **JUSTIN TROST**, District 3.

The remaining prizes were drawn. President Brokes thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

An electrical safety demonstration led by Operations Manager Marc Martin finished the evening.

Thank you to our special guests and members who attended. We look forward to seeing you next year!



We had an excellent turnout for our annual meeting with 175 members and guests present.



Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. CEO Lee Tafanelli discussing cybersecurity.



Jason Rabe (left) and Senator Dinah Sykes discuss issues of interest to members.



The evening kicked off by members arriving and registering for their prize ticket and receive their member gift, a nifty magnetic bowl with the RHEC logo.



## HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE RESIDENTIAL BUDGET PAYMENT PLAN OPTIONS AT ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC?



We offer a **VARIABLE** and a **FIXED BUDGET** option for the **RESIDENTIAL BUDGET PAYMENT PLAN**. Both plans are based on a 12-month average, and still require the member to pay their bill on time each month. The fixed option uses a set 12-month average and has a catch-up month that is due in May each year. The variable plan recalculates the 12-month average each month, with no catch-up month unless the member is removed from the plan or moves from our lines. These payment plans are optional but provide alternatives to our regular billing process.

If you are interested in either of these options, please call the office during normal business hours of Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and we would be happy to determine which plan fits your needs best.

**CALL 800-530-5572 TO REVIEW OPTIONS AND FIND THE PLAN THAT FITS YOUR NEEDS TODAY!**

## Potential For Blackouts, Now What? *Continued from page 12A* ▶

2023 Long-Term Reliability Assessment illustrates these trends. CFC Solutions, in their weekly news bulletin, stated it starkly, “Since 2012, the summer peak demand rose by 3% while the current on-peak bulk power system resource capacity fell by 4%. For the next decade, the summer peak demand is forecasted to increase by another 10% while resource capacity is expected to rise by 4%.”

It is important to remember not all energy sources have the same capacity rating, this is simply a measure of resource availability. One of the disadvantages of renewable energy sources is their low capacity rating due to their intermittency.

So, what does this mean? Rolling Hills is a distribution co-op, meaning we take electricity from a generating facility and their transmission lines to deliver it to the end user on our distribution lines. We have minimal means by which to produce electricity (mainly for peak shaving in the summer) and are bound to our power supplier and overall grid for our power supply. Unfortunately, the decisions by policymakers and the over incentivization of certain power development types have made the demand and capacity margins razor thin. They are also largely out of our control despite our best efforts to sound the alarm.

As power advisories from the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), our regional transmission operator, become more common place, it means that a few hiccups in the fuel supply, a failure at a few major power generation facilities,

or incorrect wind forecasts can lead to rolling blackouts across the SPP marketplace — similar to what occurred during Winter Storm Uri in 2021.

Another byproduct are exorbitant costs due to the great demand put on supply during extreme events. Many of these costs, including those from Winter Storm Uri for example, we are still paying for years later. This affects your power and natural gas bills and trickles through as additional input costs across every area of our lives.

So, what can we do? It is anticipated that 83 gigawatts of generation retirements will occur in the next decade. Like a large ship, it takes a long time to change direction. It also takes steady, continual input to complete the direction change. Balance is the key to correcting the course of our ship or nation in regards to energy policy. The pursuit of the cleanest, most efficient, and reliable energy should be the priority using all forms of energy production. Diversity and reliability is paramount, subsidizing all forms of energy capacity construction should be a centerpiece — not just certain forms of energy construction. This will take a decade to reverse if we start today.

As a cooperative and a cooperative member, we encourage you to discuss this topic with your local legislator and ensure they have a balanced perspective on energy — focusing on reliability. As a nation, energy security should be one of our top priorities — without it, our way of life could be severely impacted for years to come.

## LOAD CONTROL

If you are not signed up for text alerts on peak days, please call our office at 785-534-1601. If any irrigators experience issues, please call the office and speak with the operations department.

Keep **IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT** and **water streams** 15 feet away from overhead power lines.

