



## ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

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

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#### Contact Us

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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.



### FROM THE MANAGER

## Making Washington Work for You

Electric cooperatives are deeply connected to the communities they serve and are focused on meeting consumers' energy needs today and into the future. Providing our consumer-members with safe, reliable and affordable power will always be our highest priority, but this requires much more than simply maintaining overhead power lines and other infrastructure.

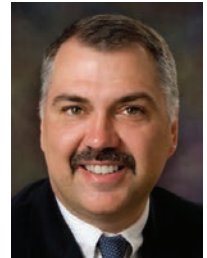
It requires us to focus on what our elected leaders are doing in Washington to ensure they are acting in our best interest. Here are some of the things we're keeping an eye on in the nation's capital.

#### RURAL Act

Congress created a problem for electric co-ops when it made changes to the tax code in 2017 that inadvertently put co-ops' tax-exempt status at risk if they received government grants. This could have stuck co-op members with the cost of paying taxes had Congress not fixed the problem by passing legislation known as the RURAL Act making it clear electric co-ops won't lose their tax-exempt status just because they receive government grants. At press time, the bill was awaiting President Trump's signature.

#### Wind Energy

Recently, the U.S. Department of Energy selected the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) — our national trade association — to research small-scale, community-based wind energy solutions that can be deployed by electric co-ops. This research, to be conducted in partnership with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, is critical to helping co-ops meet their members' desire for affordable renewable energy solutions.



Doug Jackson

#### Carbon Capture

Electric co-ops are participating in cutting-edge research to capture and use carbon emissions to make commercial products. This work is underway at the Integrated Test Center, just outside of Gillette, Wyoming, where researchers will strive to advance technologies and expand understanding of what's possible in this new arena.

#### Rural Broadband

Many electric co-ops are working to help close the digital divide by bringing broadband to unserved and underserved areas. NRECA called on

*Continued on page 16B ▶*

## WHY IS MY POWER OUT?

When the power goes out, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Here are some common reasons the power goes out:



### STORMS

Mother Nature can interfere with power delivery.



### VEGETATION

This is why we work hard to keep power lines clear.



### ANIMALS

Curious animals can cause damage, especially squirrels.



### ACCIDENTS

Run-ins with a utility pole or other equipment can cause an outage.



### PUBLIC DAMAGE

Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all interfere.



### OVERLOAD

This happens when demand spikes, like on a hot summer day.



### EQUIPMENT ISSUES

We maintain and inspect equipment regularly, but sometimes malfunctions occur.

Thank you for your patience during outages.

## Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Rolling Hills Electric receives requests for assistance with member electricity bills throughout the year. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

An online application will be available Jan. 2, 2020. To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
- ▶ Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchases of the primary heating energy.

The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 130% of the federal poverty level.

**The benefit levels vary according to the following factors:**

- ▶ Household income
- ▶ Number of persons living at the address
- ▶ Type of dwelling
- ▶ Type of heating fuel

For more information, go to [www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/Energy/EnergyAssistance](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/Energy/EnergyAssistance). Meeting all the requirements is a must. Applications must be received at the designated Energy Assistance location by March 31. Late arrivals will not be considered for assistance. The state will contact Rolling Hills Electric to verify payments are being made on the account and the account is active in the applicant's name. LIEAP payments will come directly to Rolling Hills Electric and applied directly to the account.

For more information or assistance in completing the application, please contact Linnea at 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

## Making Washington Work for You *Continued from page 16A* ▶

Congress to make more funds available for rural broadband deployment. Congress answered the call and funded ReConnect, a pilot program that supports efforts to make broadband possible in rural communities. The first grants were announced late last year, with several co-ops and their communities the beneficiaries.

These are just a few of the ways electric co-ops are working in Washington to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Because our commitment to you extends far beyond the edge of our service territory.

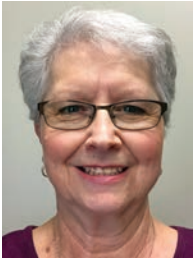
## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss by up to 10%.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## Technological Advances Improve Service to Members



Linnea Beebe

Being proactive and accepting technological advances have greatly improved our ability to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity. For instance, this past

Thanksgiving weekend, we experienced wind gusts up to 70 mph. Employees were able to monitor outages on their smartphones. We experienced very few outages, some of which were not wind-related. But, the short version of a long story is that through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) repairs over the past several years and routine pole replacements, our infrastructure is becoming stronger.

Rolling Hills Electric has been proactive in pole replacements and clearing brush and trees from our rights-of-way. Trees and brush encountering our line can cause random blinks or outages.

Our linemen are currently replacing poles at the Hunter substation. As of October, 600 poles have been replaced on that substation alone.

One of our suppliers upgraded its transmission line feeding our Glendale substation during October and November. During their upgrade process, Rolling Hills also performed maintenance and an upgrade to improve the reliability of service to our members being served by that substation.

The advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) continues with the exchange of the obsolete turtle meter to the AMI meter. In addition to the new meter, the infrastructure includes a router and a collector, which have already been installed throughout our service territory. Approximately 40% or 4,000 single-phase AMI meters have been installed and are communicating. Chapman Metering is currently installing meters on the Esbon and Hunter substations and will soon be in the Osborne area.

Marc Martin, operations manager, reports that the new meters are providing valuable meter data and improved outage notification. The new meters have many features we did not have previously.

Meter service can be activated and deactivated from the office rather than dispatching a lineman to set or remove a meter when a member moves in or out. Should one of the old meters need replacing for any reason, it will be replaced with a new AMI meter. There are many more features that can be utilized once the transition to AMI meters is complete.

There are great improvements happening within your electric cooperative to benefit you, the consumer-member. Our new website will be up and running soon if not before you receive this newsletter. Please check it out! Many thanks to Shaylee Arpin and Vicki Estes at Kansas Electric Cooperatives for their assistance with this major project.

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees and institutions (including Rolling Hills as applicable) participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal for retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint, [\[CR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf\]\(#\) and at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the complaint form.](https://www.ascr.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA-OAS-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

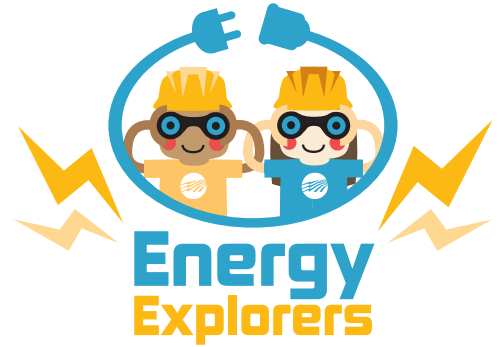
You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. Send your completed complaint form or letter to the USDA by (1) mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410, (2) by fax to 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442 or (3) by email to [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

# ENERGY SAVINGS WORD SEARCH

Did you know there are many ways you can help save energy in your home?

Read the energy efficiency tips below and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



O E S P W F W A T E R S Y E S  
 A L L R S A E T D E I A L S R  
 T E X K E J T O G H C E P X E  
 L C O O G G Z E N X C N M N W  
 B T B F M X R R R T B X Q K O  
 G R I S M M R A R H C L I D H  
 X I S Y K Y E O H X E V A F S  
 I C B X X I N Y B C N A P J I  
 A I G Y Z I H F H X C F T Y E  
 U T U N C W U Y X Z O M B E S  
 U Y Z S E M F P O R V N V T R  
 R E F R I G E R A T O R H E Q  
 E V J M Q S D M D F V G N Y L  
 W M E O F P N T K W I H X Q I  
 G N I H T O L C R L S S B R D

- Turn off **lights** any time you leave a room.
- Keep the **refrigerator** door closed to save energy.
- Wash **clothing** in cold water to reduce the load on your **water heater**.
- Unplug items that consume **electricity** even when they're not in use, like cell phone **chargers** and coffee makers. These are known as "phantom load" **electronics**.
- Take **showers** instead of baths – showers require less **water** use.