A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 339, Beloit, KS 67420
www.rollinghills.coop

ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
NEWS

FROM THE MANAGER

Rolling Hills Electric Moves Toward an Advanced Grid with Recent Investments

These days, many people are looking for ways to lower their energy use and save money. Some are buying smaller cars that get better gas mileage. Others are cashing in on energy tax credits for weatherizing their homes. Still others are replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs or LEDs.

At Rolling Hills Electric, we have actively pursued and encouraged energy savings for our members with traditional conservation methods. We have also been preparing to implement advanced grid technology to modernize our existing electrical distribution system to meet increased demands for energy and combat rising energy prices, while reducing environmental impacts. This update includes an investment and implementation of a device, often referred to as an "advanced meter" at each member location.

Advanced meters represent the next generation of electric meters and replace antiquated metering units. They take advantage of two-way communication to enable Rolling Hills to communicate with the electric meter at your home or business, enhancing reliability and providing additional capabilities. The remote communication and data transfer these technologies provide enable remote meter-reading, outage notification, optional pricing programs and alerts to help with troubleshooting and preventative maintenance.

Doug Jackson

Information coming from the meters will allow us to improve our efficiency during "peak" energy usage periods, which helps keep the cost of electricity lower. Modernizing the grid will also promote better power quality and enable your utility to be more efficient when responding to outages, conducting maintenance or planning for new equipment. Instead of using models or educated guesses, decisions can be made by utilizing real information throughout the electric system. Advanced meters also increase accuracy of electric bills (no more estimates), keep electric costs low, and allow us to diagnose problems leading to increased energy bill.

Our system upgrade paves the way toward eventually providing consumers greater access to energy use information and offering more options for consumers to see savings on their electric bills.

Advanced meters also provide for better reliability and capabilities in the future. For example, the meters, in conjunction with automated equipment will give us

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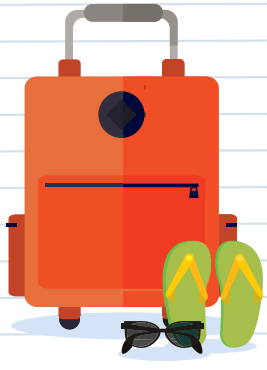
5 easy ways to prepare your home for VACATION

1. Set or program your thermostat to 85 degrees while you are away.
2. Unplug small appliances and electronic devices, including gaming systems, so they don't draw power.
3. Adjust your water heater. For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low. For an electric version, turn it off at the circuit breaker.
4. Shut all your curtains and blinds.
5. Make sure your sump pump is working.



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the ability to remotely identify the location of outages without members calling in, isolate the problem and re-route crews to speed restoration. Outage response times are expected to be faster with exact outage location information, also allowing us to provide more accurate estimates of restoration times.

Members can be assured that the advanced meters are tested by manufacturers and that they meet stringent national standards for safety, security, and privacy requirements. Meters use a variety of communication methods to communicate or transmit data; two main modes are Radio Frequency (RF) and Power Line Carrier (PLC).

Our specific meter operates using a radio frequency like what is used by walkie-talkies or some cordless phones. These meters transmit information to the utility by broadcasting for a few seconds each day to routers and data collectors that then transmit data to the utility.

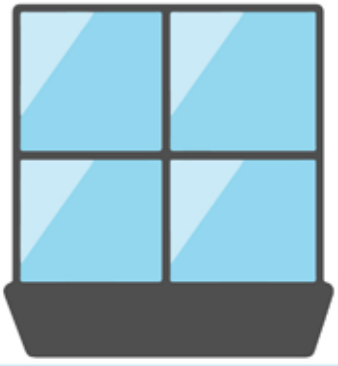
Rolling Hills Electric will begin installing advanced meters this June; members will be notified through a robocall, the Kansas Country Living magazine and on Facebook when the upgrades will be taking place in your area. The installation and technology upgrades should be transparent and will not require any action by the member to complete the process.

This project takes advantage of new technologies for our members to use and provide benefits that extend beyond our utility. We have a vision of what the energy future looks like, and we look forward to working collaboratively on reaching that vision for a more efficient, secure and reliable energy environment.

About 30% of a home's energy is lost through windows.

A few quick adjustments could help save energy. Read about some easy changes in the Beat the Peak article.

Information collected from Energy.gov, provided by SafeElectricity.org



When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!

Seek shelter indoors or in a hard-topped vehicle.

If you can't get to shelter:

- Avoid open fields and hilltops.
- Stay away from tall, isolated trees and objects.
- Spread out (if you're in a group).

#StormSafety

Frequently Asked Questions About Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI's)

Q. Why is it necessary to upgrade the electric distribution system?

A. On average we are all using more energy in our homes and businesses, powering more consumer electronics, appliances and recharging batteries for everything from a mobile phone to an electric vehicle. Energy consumption is expected to continue doubling every 20 years, increasing the need for even more use of the electricity. With our nation's electrical power infrastructure rapidly running up against its limitations, the electric industry has found it necessary to upgrade the antiquated system (parts of it are older than its expected life span) with more modern technology. An advanced power grid will give utilities tools to meet current energy challenges.

Q. What is advanced grid?

A. The advanced grid may be thought of as the internet brought to our system. It modernizes communication and the flow of information in ways that allow utilities to improve energy efficiency and improve reliability. The advanced grid is not a single thing, but rather an entire delivery system that runs from major power plants all the way to our homes and provides detailed information and remote control of devices used to deliver energy to members. Many parts of the grid are already in place and will make our electric system more efficient, reliable, resilient and responsive.

Justin Zerbe, Metering Specialist, is explaining the purpose of the AMI route as he is assembling the unit.

Q. What is Advance Metering Infrastructure and why is it important?

A. Advanced Metering Infrastructure Comprises three key elements: advanced meters, meter communication and data management. The combination of all three is vital to the development of a smart grid.

Q. Why do we need new meters?

A. During the 20th century, meter technology did not change much. Older metering units on many homes and businesses today are similar to the meter that was installed 50 years ago. Advanced meters are modern, digital meters that provide information utilities use to manage the system more efficiently and improve reliability.

The excessive moisture and mud allowed time for the linemen to assemble routers for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure.

New Employee Introductions


Shannon Duskie


Justin Zerbe


J.R. Hynek


Kristi Clark

Rolling Hills Electric is pleased to announce the hiring and to introduce the newest employees, who are all working at the Beloit headquarters.

SHANNON DUSKIE, Customer Service, joined the Rolling Hills family one year ago as a part-time employee assisting with billing, filling in for vacations and as needed.

Shannon grew up in Kanopolis, attended Ellsworth High School and studied Business Marketing, Economics and Leadership at K-State. She met her husband, Drew, in Manhattan, got married and moved back to Cawker City in 2012 where they are both active in the community.

Shannon and Drew have one son, Samson and baby #2 is due July 15. As a family, they enjoy being outside, going for bike rides, walks and exploring around the lake. Shannon loves being active, smiling, connecting with others, learning new things, traveling and relaxing with a good book and writing.

JUSTIN ZERBE, Metering Specialist, became a part of the Rolling Hills family in October 2018. Justin studied and graduated from Kansas State University in Electronic Engineering Technology, Computer Engineering Technology and Technology Management.

Justin has been in the utility industry for 20 years, specializing in distribution/transmission automation, metering and substation apparatus. He came to Rolling Hills from Border States Electric where he was a Utility Applications Specialist/Applications Engineer. "Justin will be a great asset to the cooperative as we transition to the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)," states Marc Martin, operations manager.

Justin has been married more than 15 years to his wife Stacey. They have two children, Hayden (13) and Abigail (10). In their spare time, they enjoy fishing, hunting, wood working, spending time with friends/family and working on their family farm. Justin's family is involved and active with sports and 4H, while Justin serves on the USD 393 board.

J.R. HYNEK, Journeyman Lineman, joined the Beloit line crew in January 2019. He and his wife, Sara, have a 2-year-old son, Liam and reside outside of Beloit. J.R. is originally from Wamego where he worked for Bluestem Electric. He has eight years of line experience.

J.R. enjoys bow hunting, calling coyotes and hand fishing. His favorite sports teams are K-State, KC Chiefs and KC Royals. J.R. and Sara have a small cow/calf herd and help on the in-law's farm when time allows.

KRISTI CLARK, Operations clerk, joined the Rolling Hills Electric family in April. Previously, Kristi worked for Farmway Co-op and Agmark performing various duties from accounting to inventory management. She fills a vacancy in the Operations Department.

Kristi and husband, Errick, live in Beloit with their daughter, Riley and son, Ryker. Most of their time is spent traveling to various children' activities or enjoying the outdoors. They are also avid sports fans. Kristi says she is very excited to be a part of the RHEC family and is looking for a long career here.