

4 RIVERS Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Northern District
2731 Milo Terr.
Lebo, KS 66856

Southern District
9346 Jewell Rd.
Fredonia, KS 66736

Payment Center
2501 W. 18th Ave., Ste. B
Emporia, KS 66801

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE **CURRENTS**

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Manager of Member and Corporate Services

OPERATIONS REPORT

Changing Focus



Mark Doebele
Assistant General
Manager

Your newly consolidated 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is now seven months young. We planned for many different obstacles and challenges during the first year of consolidation, but

a pandemic was not in our vision.

Last year, we began internal discussions of slightly different policies and procedures of the individual cooperatives in an effort to build an updated set for 4 Rivers Electric. We continued those great discussions post-consolidation and were making advances until the pandemic forced us to change our focus.

This past spring, because of safety concerns for the public, our employees and their families, we needed to keep our teams isolated and safe. Some employees worked from home. Some worked on a staggered shift to reduce the number of people together in the office area. The public was not allowed into our office atriums. Inner office travel was only used for essential needs, and we communicated by telephone and videoconferencing. After a review by management in May, we felt the plan was successful and decided our best course of action was to comply with the governor's executive orders moving forward, since we have facilities in 16 area counties.

In June, we adjusted our focus back to the needs of the cooperative. We

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home. Visit www.energystar.gov, then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started.

Source: energy.gov



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Your Co-op Team

From linemen to member service representatives to managers, your 4 Rivers team is dedicated to making the transition to 4 Rivers as smooth as possible for our members and look forward to getting to know those in our expanded territory.



Jill Whitworth

JILL WHITWORTH

began working for Lyon-Coffey Electric three years ago and serves as a customer service representative. If you have called or visited our Lebo office, you may have spoken with her, as she assists consumer-members with

a wide range of inquiries from billing and payments to outages and new services. She loves her co-workers and getting to know our consumer-members and helping them however needed. She is eager to learn new things and always willing to do what is necessary to help.

Whitworth grew up in Pittsburg, but moved to Burlington 26 years ago with her husband, Charlie, where they have raised two sons, Cooper, 23, and Tucker, 21, and a daughter, Karlie, 16. The Whitworths are an active family who value quality time together. She also enjoys going to the lake, boating with friends, watching Hallmark movies, and baking. She even has a side business making beautiful cookies. Her proudest accomplishments include her strong faith in God, her marriage and her children. She looks forward to watching her children grow up and having grandchildren someday. Whitworth finds inspiration in her mother for many reasons, but mainly her strength and determination in her fight to live as she has battle various cancers for 32 years without complaint.

The biggest change she has seen in the co-op is the consolidation of our Lyon-Coffey and Radiant cooperatives. She has enjoyed becoming acquainted with new co-workers and consumer-members. She takes the time to listen, let them know we are here for them and provide the best service she can. Thanks to Jill for her positive spirit and eagerness to assist.



Jeff Reed

JEFF REED is a journeyman lineman and digger operator, helping the construction crew set poles, build line, and acting as crew foreman when needed. As a Fredonia native, he went to work for Radiant Electric Cooperative nearly 35 years ago and enjoys the camaraderie with the crew members, getting to know new people and watching the newer linemen mature and grow in their positions.

Reed and his wife of 36 years, Julie, live in rural Fredonia. He is proud of his four children and three

grandkids. Reed enjoys running his cattle operation and farming. On the job, he enjoys building new lines, upgrading the system and changing out poles and conductors. He appreciates the changes he has seen over the years, like much better equipment and better safety rules. When he started decades ago, there were five basic safety rules, and now they fill a three-ring binder. Reed says working at the co-op has taught him to be patient yet persistent with others, helping them to learn and grow much like the older linemen taught him over the years.

Reed enjoys being a lineman and wants our consumer-members to know we are here to help. He also looks forward to retirement someday when he no longer has to worry about storms rolling through and can travel without answering to the clock. Thanks to Jeff for all his years of dedication to the co-op.



Rory Shetler

RORY SHETLER is an area foreman who started with Lyon-Coffey Electric 10 years ago. Before working for the cooperative, Shetler was a police officer for 17 years and then started his electrical linemen career at the City of Burlington. With 4 Rivers, he helps build and maintain the electric distribution system and likes the variety that comes with the job, working with the different crews and seeing different parts of the system.

Shetler is originally from Council Grove but lives in rural Waverly. He is very proud of his two children, along with his girlfriend and her three children, and enjoys spending time with them and watching their various sporting events. In his spare time, he enjoys being outdoors, hunting, fishing, shooting and barbecuing. He is inspired by his mom, the strongest person he has known, who battled cancer for nearly three years before succumbing to her illness.

Shetler has seen changes over the years, but especially having better tools available to make the linework safer. Working at the cooperative has taught him patience. He wants consumer-members to know that the cooperative is working every day for them. Thank you to Rory for your continued service to our consumer-members.

Changing Focus

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started in-person meetings again, and things were feeling “normal” to some degree. This was refreshing, as face-to-face engagement allowed staff to share their thoughts while becoming better acquainted on a more personal and professional level.

In July, we were asked to adjust our focus yet again. Due to the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in Kansas, the governor issued an executive order requesting Kansans to wear face coverings while in public areas. 4 Rivers Electric is abiding by this order and employees are using face coverings in public areas. One exception to the order applies to the work areas of our line crews. If you see our linemen working without face coverings, it is because of safety concerns. Supervisors and crew members are trained to constantly scan for potential hazards to keep each other and the public safe. Supervisors do not allow the public or another employee to enter the work area unless the person asking to enter can meet the safety requirements of the work being performed. If a work area is breached, all work shall stop and face coverings will be utilized if needed. The work area will remain inactive until the breach has been cleared, and the area declared safe by a 4 Rivers supervisor.

Electric cooperatives supply electricity to mainly rural areas through many miles of exposed lines that are subject to the wrath of tornadoes, ice, lightning and wind. In Kan-

sas, a thunderstorm can pop up in a matter of minutes and develop tremendous power that easily damages poles, lines and transformers. Cooperative employees are accustomed to quickly changing focus from personal life to an all-night restoration effort for the cooperative.

Our employees feel they are always ready for the next challenge that Mother Nature throws at us, but this challenge is different. Part of our job is to always keep the public and each other safe. This time, keeping each other safe is not just part of the challenge—it IS the challenge. This requires us to change our focus in a vastly different manner than usual. Most situations require us to repair what is broken and return to our “normal.” This time, our focus on safety and protecting each other must be open-ended and continue even on personal time, because COVID-19 is not going to give us a break.

Safety in the electric cooperative world has always been stressed. We say the words and follow those words up with actions. 4 Rivers Electric is committed to providing you, our consumer-members, safe and affordable electricity. When you see 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative employees out and about social distancing and wearing face coverings, please feel free to let them know your appreciation, but please stay out of the work areas. We appreciate your support and cooperation.

4 Rivers Hosts Legislators at Co-ops Vote Event

This fall, Kansans will have the opportunity to vote for candidates who will represent them in Washington, D.C., Topeka and at local levels of government. Kansas’ electric cooperatives are using the election season as a chance to get to know candidates and educate those interested in holding elected office on issues of importance to electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. The visits are a part of the Co-ops Vote initiative, a non-partisan effort to encourage electric co-op members to be educated, engaged voters.

This year’s visits are designed as informal come and go events to allow for ultimate flexibility and provide for adequate social distancing.. As part of this effort Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. staff and candidates for elected office have spent time visiting electric cooperatives to talk with staff about COVID-19 response efforts at the cooperatives and in the communities,

the importance of broadband infrastructure, and the vitality of rural Kansas. As part of the 2020 efforts, 4 Rivers hosted state representatives Mark Schreiber of Emporia and Mark Samsel of Wellsville on July 7. These visits provide cooperatives a chance to get to know those who run for elected offices across the state.



A recent Co-ops Vote event brought together cooperative representatives Phil Wages (second from right), Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Dennis Svanes, 4 Rivers General Manager (center), and Assistant Manager Mark Doebele (second from left) to speak with state representatives Mark Schreiber of Emporia (far left) and Mark Samsel of Wellsville (far right) on July 7.

Electricity Brings Everyday Value

Because electricity is so abundant and readily available in this country, people usually don't think too much about it. We expect the lights to turn on when the switch is flipped and the coffee maker to work each morning. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it is a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most consumer goods.

Many of us have a cell phone to stay connected or subscribe to certain television channels to enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these as necessities for modern-day life. We can see what we are getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we do not necessarily "see" all that we are getting for our money.

However, considering what electricity does for us, it is a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% from 2014-2019, according to the Bu-

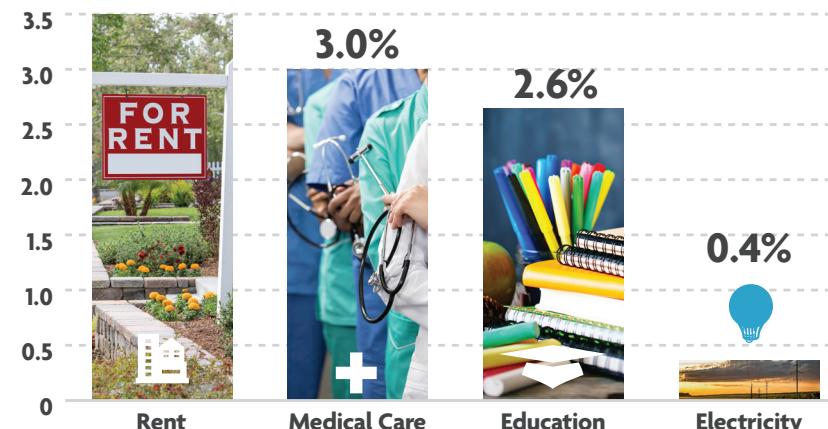
ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019

Percent

4.0 **3.7%**



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & Consumer Price Index

reau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care increased 3% during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4%.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. Additionally, we strive to increase our service reliability, reduce interruptions and reduce costs.

We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

4 Rivers Electric provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you save you energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members, and we are here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please call us. 4 Rivers Electric is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

The Value of Electricity

What is your electricity worth?

\$5.30

average cost
of a burger
value meal.



Sources: Economist.com and EIA, 2018 data.

