

www.4riverselectric.com
620-364-2116 or 800-748-7395

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2731 Milo Terr.
Lebo, KS 66856

Southern District
9346 Jewell Road
Fredonia, KS 66736

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

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CURRENTS

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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FROM THE MANAGER

Mark Your Calendars!

4 Rivers Electric
Annual Meeting is March 25



Dennis Svanes

Get ready to join your fellow members for the Annual Meeting of 4 Rivers Electric, happening **MARCH 25 AT 7 P.M.** at Fredonia High School!

Before the meeting kicks off, we'll have a delicious meal and informative booths on safety, billing and more.

This year's meeting marks a significant milestone in our journey: the final reduction in the size of our board of trustees. After merging Lyon-Coffey and Radiant, we're down to a streamlined board of nine dedicated individuals, compared to the original 14 board positions. While this ensures cost-efficiency and a "right-sized" structure, it also means saying goodbye to valued board members.

Speaking of members, it's your chance to cast your vote in this year's election! Ballots have been mailed for the 2024 election. As always, any eligible co-op member can appear on the ballot by securing 20 signatures from their district, filling out a simple

form, and submitting it by December's end. This process applies to both incumbents and any new nominees. Remember, each district elects one trustee every year for a three-year term.

Our board takes learning and expertise seriously. We strongly encourage trustees to attend industry courses and even get certified through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. I'm proud to say that all our current members hold the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate and many also boast the Board Leadership certificate and Director Gold credential.

Don't miss out! Mail or drop off your ballots by Feb. 20, mark March 25 on your calendar, and join us at Fredonia High School for an informative and engaging annual meeting. Be sure to watch for our official notice of meeting in March's annual meeting issue of the *Kansas Country Living*. Let's raise a glass to our cooperative's future and elect the leaders who will guide us there!

SEE YOU THERE!



LIEAP APPLICATIONS PERIOD IS OPEN

APPLICATION PERIOD ENDS MARCH 29

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps keep families safe and healthy by assisting eligible households with a portion of their home energy costs by providing a once per year benefit.

The 2024 LIEAP application period is open; applications must be received online or in a Kansas Dept. for Children and Families (DCF) office **BY MARCH 29** to be considered for eligibility. For more information or to request an application, call 800-432-0043 or visit www.dcf.ks.gov.

CALLING STUDENT LEADERS!

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS APPLY BY FEB. 12



4 Rivers Electric's strong tradition of promoting youth leadership continues with two leadership opportunities this summer.

The co-op will send two high school juniors on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, June 14-20, 2024, to Washington, D.C., and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, July 12-18, 2024, near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Any high school junior living in 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative territory whose parent or guardian is a 4 Rivers member is eligible.

Find more information, call 620-364-2116 ext. 306 or visit www.4riverselectric.com to apply. Applications are due Feb. 12. Four winners and two alternates will be selected.



SCAN TO APPLY BY FEB. 12.

How Severe Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use increases. People are doing more activities inside, and heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that can equal a strain on the electric grid.

At 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, we work closely with Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), our local generation and transmission (G&T), in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch. However, the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power interruptions to relieve pressure on the grid, and 4 Rivers Electric will inform you about the situation as information becomes available.

4 Rivers Electric and KEPCo take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid and save a little money along the way:

- ▶ Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.

- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- ▶ Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed. Experts recommend replacing your furnace filter at least every three months or every two months if you have pets or allergies.
- ▶ When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- ▶ Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face potential winter weather challenges, understanding their impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

YOU HAVE A VOICE AT YOUR CO-OP

Vote in trustee elections by Feb. 20

One member, one vote. Democratic Member Control is so important to cooperative function that it stands as one of the seven principles of all cooperatives. You can exercise your cooperative member influence by voting in the current election of trustees.

Ballots were mailed in January to members of all three cooperative districts. Ballots can be completed and returned in the enclosed envelopes, which must be postmarked or delivered to our Lebo office no later than Feb. 20. Winners will be announced at our annual meeting on March 25 in Fredonia.

To appear on the ballot as a candidate, eligible members

submitted a petition for nomination in December with signatures from at least 20 members in their district. For this election cycle, only one member from each district submitted a petition for nomination for the available board positions. They are:

- ▶ District 1: **A. EUGENE HUSTON**, Americus
- ▶ District 2: **WARREN SCHMIDT**, Hartford
- ▶ District 3: **LARRY FELTS**, Liberty

**JOIN US MARCH 25
MEETING AT 7 P.M.
FREDONIA HIGH SCHOOL**

DISTRICT 1

A. EUGENE HUSTON AMERICUS

Huston has been a resident of North Lyon County and member of Lyon-Coffey Electric, now 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, for 48 years. After graduation from Cunningham High School, Huston attended Wichita State University, graduating in 1972. He spent 30 years working as a locomotive engineer. Since retirement he has served as a licensed local pastor for the United Methodist Churches in Neosho Rapids and Hartford. He and his wife, Janice, have been married 58 years and have two children, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He was a member of the Americus United Methodist Church until he went into the ministry. He is also a member of the Lyon County Extension Board.

Huston has been on the Lyon-Coffey and 4 Rivers Co-op board since 2011, serving as secretary for several years. He has received the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Directors Gold Credential and attends yearly educational conferences to knowledgeably represent the members.



DISTRICT 2

WARREN SCHMIDT HARTFORD

Schmidt has been a cooperative member for 45 years, serving the last 11 as a board member of both Lyon-Coffey, now 4 Rivers Electric Co-op. His father, Richard, served for eight years as a board member for Lyon-Coffey Electric until his passing. He has been a resident of rural Hartford his entire life, farming for most of those years. He is currently the third-generation farmer of the RJ Schmidt Farm, a cow/calf, small grains and row crop operation. In addition to farming, for the past 30 years, he has worked in agricultural equipment sales for the John Deere dealership in Emporia, now working in their parts department.

Schmidt has received his National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA) certification for Board Leadership, NRECA Director Gold Credential and Certified Cooperative Director certificate. He enjoys representing the co-op membership and appreciates the opportunity to serve 4 Rivers members, considering it and honor and privilege.



DISTRICT 3

LARRY FELTS LIBERTY

Felts and his wife, Ruth, reside west of Liberty and have three grown children and eight grandchildren. He operates a family farm with his brother Richard, nephew Darren Felts, and son-in-law Adam Ewing. Felts Farms raises corn, wheat and soybeans, along with a cow-calf herd and a herd of hair sheep.

Felts graduated from Field Kindley High School and Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science and industry. He is chairman of Liberty Community Church Administrative Board, treasurer of Montgomery County Rural Fire District No. 1 Firefighters Relief Association, and a member of Liberty Division of Montgomery County Rural Fire District No. 1. He also chairs Verdigris Drainage District No. 3 in Montgomery County.

He served on the boards of Radiant Electric Cooperative and 4 Rivers Electric, serving as board president the past year. Felts has obtained National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certificates and Director Gold Credential.



Horses Gallop and so Can Power Lines

How can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution?

Gallop power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to begin bouncing.

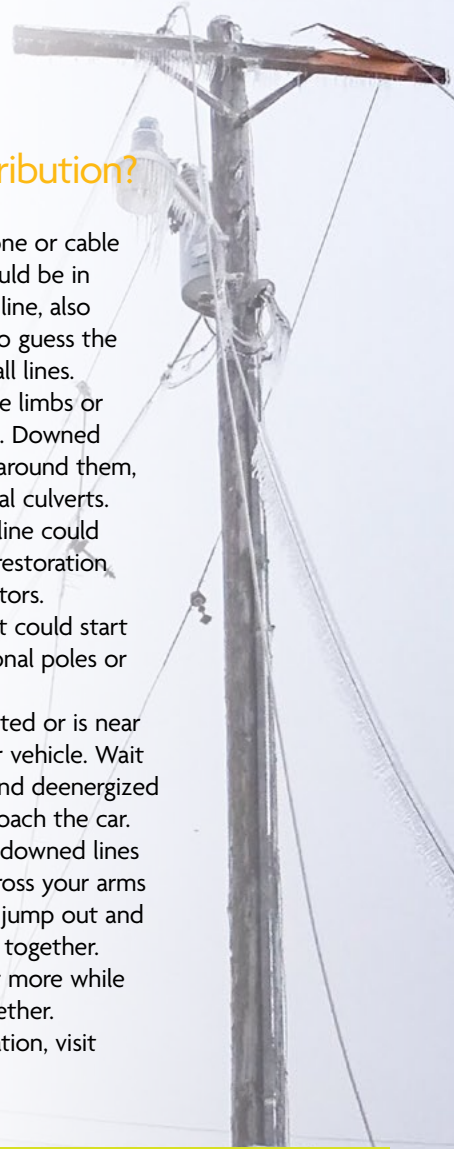
They can bounce and buck enough to hit another line causing blinks, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

A power company can't prevent galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. However, some power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line to minimize the motion. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or call 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.

- ▶ Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines.
 - ▶ Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
 - ▶ Keep in mind that a deenergized line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
 - ▶ Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
 - ▶ If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
 - ▶ Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.
- For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



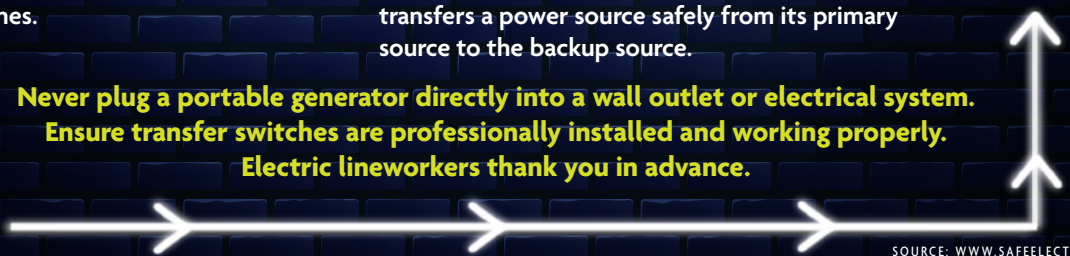
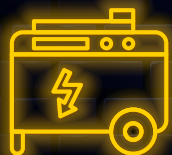
What is **Backfeed?**

Avoid deadly backfeed and help keep lineworkers safe.

Backfeed is when power flows in reverse. An alternate power source, usually a portable or permanent generator, feeds energy back through a home's electrical system, meter and into the power lines.

Permanent generators should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician and have an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator. A transfer switch transfers a power source safely from its primary source to the backup source.

**Never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system.
Ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly.
Electric lineworkers thank you in advance.**



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRIC.ORG