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4 RIVERS
Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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FROM THE MANAGER

Harnessing the Power of SmartHub

A simple, convenient way to manage your account

At times, I have members ask if there are other ways to report outages besides the traditional phone call. We do have an effective and convenient way to report and monitor outages through our innovative SmartHub mobile app.

Available for free download from the App Store or Google Play, SmartHub can also be accessed directly from our website www.4riverselectric.com.

With the SmartHub app, reporting an outage is just a tap away, and you can see if an outage has already been reported in your area and add helpful comments to assist our crews with power restoration, such as hearing the “pop” of a transformer fuse or seeing a line down in your area.

SmartHub also comes with insightful usage tracking features. For instance, I once had to use large fans and dehumidifiers to tackle a water leak in my home. With SmartHub, I could monitor the significant increase in my power consumption. While 4 Rivers can't determine how you use electricity, we can provide the usage information, and you, the best evaluator of your own consumption, can analyze it.

One key feature of our SmartHub app is the ability for you to interact with us. Feel free to ask questions about your bills or any other matter at your convenience, and we will respond promptly during business hours.

Not just that, the SmartHub app enables seamless payment of your 4 Rivers bills, including payment processing, scheduling one-time or monthly recurring payments, and updating bank or credit card information. You can even set up notifications for bill availability, credit card expiration reminders, and payment confirmations. For those who prefer an eco-friendly approach, the app allows you to enable paperless billing.

I hope you try the SmartHub app and see the many options available to our members. If you have any questions about it, please call our office for assistance.

Here's to a Happy New Year and a simple, innovative way to manage your 4 Rivers service!



Dennis Svanes

HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2024

THE HEADER PHOTO ABOVE, HIGHLIGHTING THE BEAUTY OF OUR COOPERATIVE TERRITORY, WAS TAKEN BY MEMBER KIMBERLY STITHEM OF RURAL FREDONIA.

YOUTH PROGRAM TRIPS

Summer 2024



Calling all co-op student leaders! High school juniors invited to apply for summer opportunities

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 and two high school juniors to the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

We are excited to bring our youth back to the capital! During the **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR**, June 14-20, 2024, students will travel to Washington, D.C., explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress, and make lifelong friends with students from across the country. This trip of a lifetime provides leadership lessons from our nation's history and the cooperative spirit that built our nation.

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP will be July 12-18, 2024, near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. High school students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming

participate in this leadership camp. Together, they will create a candy cooperative, hear from dynamic speakers, and raft down the Colorado River.

If you know of a student with strong leadership potential who is ready for new experiences, would like to network with other student leaders, and is willing to learn more about themselves and their communities, encourage them to apply for these incredible leadership opportunities. Any high school junior living in 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative territory whose parent or guardian is a 4 Rivers member is eligible.

Contest applications are available online at www.4riverselectric.com and are **DUE FEB. 12**, so sign up today! Four winners and two alternates will be selected. Visit us online for more information or contact our Manager of Member Services, April Engstrom, at 620-364-2116 ext 306.



**SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION BY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12**



Keeping Member Data Safe and Secure: PCI Compliance Priority No. 1

Have you experienced being redirected to an automated system lately when trying to provide your bank card information to make a payment? Though it may seem burdensome at times, companies are diligently implementing PCI standards as a proactive measure to safeguard your data.

WHAT ARE PCI STANDARDS?

Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) comprises a set of rules that businesses handling credit card information, including 4 Rivers, must follow as part of their agreements with card processing companies. Think of it as

a security checklist to which we adhere to protect you and our cooperative.

PCI compliance requires 4 Rivers to use secure methods for credit card data handling, limiting access to your information. The fewer people who have access to your info, the better. Sharing credit card information from person to person is not as safe as other methods. We advise using SmartHub at www.4riverselectric.com or via the mobile app, our automated payment line, or paying in person. Please reach out to one of our service representatives at 620-364-2116 if you have questions or need assistance.



SAFE, RELIABLE SERVICE WE'RE HERE FOR YOU 24/7

If you are faced with a sudden power outage in the middle of the night, you can rely on 4 Rivers, YOUR electric cooperative, to be there for you. To aid our endeavors, 4 Rivers partners with Security and Response Services (SRS) by Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, ND, to provide 24/7 dispatching services, while alleviating some pressure off 4 Rivers staff after hours and on holidays. SRS employs over 20 staff members dedicated to after-hours dispatch.

We at 4 Rivers, together with SRS, are dedicated and available day and night to receive outage reports, troubleshoot issues, and ensure prompt restoration of power. Whether you report an outage by phone or SmartHub mobile app, our dispatch team quickly goes to work dispatching 4 Rivers line crews and continually tracking outage progress until the power is restored, prioritizing lineman safety with regular check-ins throughout the process.

Beyond our commitment to service reliability, we value open communication with our members. In the event of a power outage, we understand the importance of up-to-date information on the status of your service. With this in mind, we offer real-time updates via our website's outage map and the SmartHub mobile app, allowing you to plan accordingly and minimize the stress that comes with power interruptions.

Furthermore, we regularly invest in infrastructure upgrades to enhance service reliability and minimize power interruptions. At 4 Rivers, your comfort and satisfaction are at the heart of our service. Rest assured that with us, you are not merely a customer, but a valued member of our cooperative community.

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, with the support of SRS, is always on duty, committed to providing safe, reliable electric service to our members around the clock.

LIEAP BENEFITS – DO YOU QUALIFY?

APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS IN JANUARY

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.

2024 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES			
Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,823	7	\$5,678
2	\$2,465	8	\$6,320
3	\$3,108	9	\$6,963
4	\$3,750	10	\$7,605
5	\$4,393	11	\$8,248
6	\$5,035	12	\$8,890
+1	\$643 for each additional person		

LIEAP applications must be received online or in a Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) office by 5 p.m., March 29, 2024, to be considered for eligibility.

Benefit levels vary according to household income, number of persons living at the address, type of dwelling, and type of heating fuel. 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 purchase of the primary heating energy.
- ▶ The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level according to the guidelines listed below.

For more information about the application process or to request an application, call 800-432-0043 or visit www.dcf.ks.gov.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions 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 or 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.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, 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.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Winter Prep? Think Safety First.

BY PAT MELGARES, K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

If there's a buzzword for winter that Chip Redmond subscribes to, it would certainly be safety.

As a climatologist and manager of the Kansas Mesonet at Kansas State University, Redmond understands the many risks of winter weather.

"The most obvious may be the cold," Redmond said. "It's definitely a time to start pulling out the warmer stuff; the thermals, the overalls ... we really need to become conscious about how many layers we put on in anticipation that the weather can change pretty rapidly this time of year."

Morning temperatures, he said, can be quite chilly, but temperatures in the Midwest and other parts of the country often can warm nicely in the afternoon, before cooling again at sunset. Layering helps to protect during daily weather variations, Redmond said.

He also suggests a warm hat or stocking cap; mittens or gloves; and footwear that provides warmth and traction.

"There is usually an increase in slides or falling accidents this time of year when we get snow," he said. "I suggest minimizing your outside time during slippery periods, or at least have the proper footwear and avoid areas where ice might build up. Sometimes it's easier to walk on grass than the sidewalk."

Redmond offers additional safety tips as winter weather approaches.

REMOVING SNOW

"As much as I don't want to admit it, I'm not as young as I was yesterday," Redmond said. "It takes a toll when we put our bodies under the stress of shoveling snow, especially wet, heavy snow that can be very physically demanding. That has been a leading cause of injuries and even death due to heart attacks. Be vigilant in what your body is capable of."

Redmond suggests asking friends,

family and neighbors for help; removing snow in a way that doesn't require picking it up and throwing it; or using a snowblower.

WINTER TRAVEL

"Travel can be a challenge any time of year, but it becomes much more of a challenge in winter because conditions change quickly over short distances," Redmond said.

He advises travelers to always check weather forecasts for their current location, their destination — and points in between.

"There are some apps available that will give you weather by the road [you're traveling]," said Redmond, who suggests the U.S. government website, www.weather.gov, for reliable, up-to-date forecasts across the country.

In Kansas, the Kansas Department of Transportation maintains a website, www.kandrive.org, that includes forecasts, road conditions, live cameras, road closures, and more.

Redmond said if a car's tires are worn, get new ones put on immediately. And, he says, keep a winter preparedness kit in the car that includes such items as blankets, flashlight, cellphone charger, water, radio, dry food and other items to help you weather the elements in case of a breakdown.

When storms are imminent, "don't travel," he said. "Make the smart decision to not go out there."

STAY OFF FROZEN WATERWAYS

"A lot of people in Kansas think that frozen ponds are pretty and they're fun to walk on," Redmond said. "But there's very rarely ever a pond or a lake that's truly safe to walk on. To support a person's weight, you need a lot of ice. To keep that ice frozen, we rarely see those weather conditions align because we still get warmer temperatures in the winter, and enough sun to melt the ice during the afternoon."