

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

Lebo Headquarters
2731 Milo Terr.
Lebo, KS 66856

Fredonia Office
9346 Jewell Road
Fredonia, KS 66736

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

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CURRENTS

4 RIVERS

Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES *Serving and Caring*

Larry Felts
President

Stacy Heins
Vice-President

Warren Schmidt
Secretary

Loren Dickens
Treasurer

Tom Ayers
Trustee

Randall Bunnel
Trustee

Robert Converse
Trustee

Gene Huston
Trustee

David Kunkel
Trustee

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

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



4RiversElectricCooperativeInc

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Maximizing Energy Efficiency This Summer

Energy efficiency may not be the most exciting topic, but it's one that matters to all of us — especially when it comes to managing your electric bill. The most effective way to save money on your bill? Simply use less electricity. Every kilowatt-hour (kWh) you don't use is money saved.

Sometimes I hear folks mention rooftop solar as a form of energy efficiency. While solar can change how your energy is generated, it doesn't reduce how much you are using. That's an important distinction. While solar may seem appealing for environmental reasons, from a financial standpoint, it is not the most cost-effective option —

especially when you consider long-term investment. When I run the numbers using net present value, buying power from 4 Rivers is still the better deal for members.

So, what can you do to cut down on usage, especially during the hot summer months? Here are a few practical ideas:

► **USE FANS WISELY.** Ceiling and box fans are great for keeping cool, but remember — they cool people, not rooms. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Continued on page 12C ►



Dennis Svanes

JUNE ADJUSTMENTS FOR BUDGET BILLS

Members enrolled in budget billing will see their biannual adjustment reflected on bills issued in June. Power bills issued in May noted members' updated budget billing amount to be effective this month.

Budget billing, sometimes known as leveled billing or an even payment plan, is one alternative to traditional monthly billing offered by 4 Rivers. This option provides a more predictable monthly payment by averaging your account's past usage and applicable fees.

Accounts are automatically reviewed twice a year, and the budget amount is adjusted based on any changes in average usage or fees. These periodic updates help prevent large end-of-year credits or balances due.

If you're interested in signing up for budget billing, call us at 620-364-2116.



PHOTO ABOVE SHOWCASES A PASTORAL BARNYARD IN WILSON COUNTY, PHOTOGRAPHED BY CO-OP MEMBER KIRA FRANKENBERY OF RURAL FREDONIA.

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS PROVIDE EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS



Trenton Sleichter

4 Rivers welcomes two students of Pratt Community College's lineworker program as interns to the crew this summer.

TRENTON SLEICHTER joins the north district line crew based out of the Lebo office. Sleichter was a 2024 recipient of 4 Rivers' lineworker scholarship.

BRADEN JONES is working out of the Fredonia office with the south line crew.

Internships provide students with valuable on-the-job experience, and we are pleased to be working with Sleichter and Jones this summer as they further their careers in electrical linework.



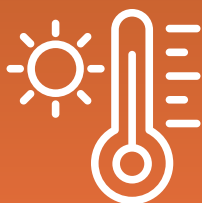
Braden Jones

Jones this summer as they further their careers in electrical linework.

SAFETY TIP

If you work outdoors, hydration is key. Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you're not thirsty, to help prevent heat exhaustion. Take breaks in a shady or cool area, and schedule heavy work for cooler times of day.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



Oneal and Budke Awarded 2025 Lineworker Scholarships



Ashton Oneal

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is proud to announce the recipients of its 2025 Lineworker Scholarships: **ASHTON ONEAL** and **REECE BUDKE**.

Each recipient will receive up to \$5,000 toward tuition, fees, books, tools and supplies as they complete an electric lineworker program at an accredited institution. The scholarship is part of 4 Rivers' ongoing commitment to community, while supporting workforce development and encouraging careers that serve the cooperative's mission and members.

Budke, a recent graduate of Chase County High School, plans to attend the lineman training program at Pratt Community College.

Oneal, a recent graduate of Fredonia High School, expressed gratitude and enthusiasm for the opportunity. "I'm so thankful to be able to accept this scholarship and use it to help with electrical lineman school," he said. "I plan to attend Pratt's lineman program at the Coffeyville location while graduating with my associates degree. I'm so excited to start my career as a lineman where



Reece Budke

every day I will learn new things and be able to provide for our community."

A scholarship selection committee composed of 4 Rivers Cooperative members reviewed applications based on educational and career goals, understanding of the lineworker role, and overall potential to contribute to the electric utility field.

"We're proud to support these students as they pursue careers in electric linework — an essential and rewarding trade that keeps our communities powered and connected," said April Engstrom, Manager of Member Services at 4 Rivers. "Investing in the next generation of lineworkers helps ensure the future strength of our cooperative and the services we provide."

To learn more about 4 Rivers Electric's programs and services, visit www.4riverselectric.com or follow us on Facebook.

We're proud to support these students as they pursue careers in electric linework — an essential and rewarding trade that keeps our communities powered and connected.

APRIL ENGSTROM, MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES AT 4 RIVERS

Smart Ways to Save Energy This Summer

DON'T SWEAT THE HEAT

Summer heat can strain both your comfort and your budget. As temperatures soar and energy demand peaks in the late afternoon and evening, it's time to take steps to lower your energy consumption and stay cool without breaking the bank.

BOOST YOUR HOME'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Start with a home energy audit. You can't fix what you don't know about. Conduct a personal home energy audit yourself or request help from a professional to identify where energy is being lost. Then take action to reduce usage this summer.

KEEP COOL AIR IN AND HOT AIR OUT

- ▶ Seal air leaks around pipes, doors, windows, cracks and openings with caulk or weather stripping.
- ▶ Schedule an HVAC system inspection with a professional to maintain performance. 4 Rivers offers certain rebates for energy-efficient replacements for water heaters, and air/ground source heat pumps.
- ▶ Change your air filter regularly. A clogged air filter makes your HVAC system work harder.
- ▶ Switch to LED bulbs for increased efficiency.
- ▶ Install a smart or programmable thermostat for automatic temperature control.

REDUCE COSTS WITH SMART APPLIANCE USE

- ▶ Run dryers, washers and dishwashers early in the morning or late in the evening.

- ▶ Wash full loads of laundry in cold water. It's the detergent, not hot water, that cleans the clothes.
- ▶ Clean the dryer's lint trap after every laundry load, and air-dry clothes when possible.
- ▶ Reduce heat-generating activities at home, like cooking during the hottest parts of the day or using heat-producing appliances.
- ▶ Use a microwave oven or countertop appliance instead of a conventional range or oven. Better yet, grill outside!

TAKE EASY ACTIONS FOR BIG ENERGY SAVINGS:

- ▶ Change ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise to cool rooms and turn them off when you leave the room. Ceiling fans don't actually cool the air; they create a wind chill effect on your skin by circulating air around you.
- ▶ Stay on the lowest floor of your home for naturally cooler air.
- ▶ Close blinds and shades on sunny days to block excess heat.
- ▶ Increase your thermostat by 2 degrees or more and set it to higher temperatures when you're away.
- ▶ Turn off and disconnect electronics that are not in use.
- ▶ Prepare no-heat meals like salads, wraps and dips.

Making small changes to reduce energy use can make a big impact. You'll keep cool, save money on your utility bill and help reduce energy demand.

If you own your home and want to find out more about how to conduct a home energy audit, please contact our member services team at 620-364-2116 for more information. We want all 4 Rivers' members to stay cool by saving money and beating the heat!

MAXIMIZING ENERGY EFFICIENCY THIS SUMMER *Continued from page 12A* ▶

- ▶ **ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT.** Turning it up just a couple degrees can make a noticeable difference in energy use.
- ▶ **UPGRADE TO ENERGY-EFFICIENT APPLIANCES.** Look for the Energy Star® label when replacing old appliances. Also, think twice before moving that old fridge to the garage just to keep drinks cold — they can be energy hogs.
- ▶ **SWITCH TO LED BULBS.** They use far less electricity and last much longer. When shopping, check the color temperature listed in Kelvin (K):
 - ▶ 2,700 K = warm yellow light (cozy and calming)
 - ▶ 3,500 K–4,000 K = natural white (great for kitchens and workspaces)
 - ▶ 5,000 K+ = bright daylight (can feel a bit harsh in the wrong space)
- ▶ **SEAL UP LEAKS.** Caulking around windows and adding window treatments — especially on the sunny south and west sides — can ease the load on your air conditioner.

I could keep going with ways to save on your energy bill. Our member services team at 4 Rivers is always happy to talk through ways to help you lower your energy use without sacrificing comfort. Just give us a call.

A QUICK WORD ABOUT SAFETY

In April, our *Kansas Country Living* article focused on staying safe around electric lines — and the timing couldn't have been more critical. Within just a few weeks, we had 11 incidents where equipment struck our lines or poles. That's 11 too many.

Please, before you head out to the field or start a big project, take a moment to locate poles, guy wires, and overhead lines. These accidents are not only costly (and billed to the party responsible), but more importantly, they are incredibly dangerous.

Let's look out for each other — by staying safe and finding smart ways to save energy this summer.



Understanding the Power Behind Your Power

At 4 Rivers, our goal is to help members make informed, financially sound energy decisions — while protecting system reliability and keeping costs fair for everyone.

Understanding Solar Limits and Safe Interconnection

At 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, we support utility-scale renewable energy as part of our balanced mix of energy sources that serve our entire membership efficiently and affordably.

Occasionally, members choose to install solar inverting systems at their homes. While 4 Rivers provides technical assistance with system sizing, safety protocols, and interconnection requirements, we urge our members to truly consider the long-term cost of the system, which is not often a sound financial decision. We encourage investing wisely in energy efficiency improvements to help cut back on electric consumption before considering the high cost of solar installation.

Also, there are limits to how much distributed generation (DG), like rooftop solar, can be connected to a single substation or circuit. **WHY ARE THERE LIMITS ON HOW MUCH DG CAN BE CONNECTED?** Our electric grid was originally designed for one-way power flow — from substations out to homes and businesses. When excess energy is pushed back onto the grid from DG, this creates two-way flow, which can cause problems if too many systems are feeding in at once.

Too much generation on a single circuit can lead to:

- ▶ Voltage instability, which can damage equipment.
- ▶ Safety concerns for linemen working on what should be de-energized lines.
- ▶ Protection system issues, where the system may not detect or isolate faults correctly.

To ensure a safe, reliable system, 4 Rivers requires an approved interconnection agreement before

any DG system can be connected to our grid. This confirms the proposed system meets technical requirements and that capacity is available on the circuit.

Unfortunately, some solar companies use aggressive sales tactics or make misleading claims about energy savings, tax credits, or payback periods. We strongly encourage members to contact us before signing any contract. Our team can help you:

- ▶ Confirm if DG capacity is available for your location.
- ▶ Review your electric usage history to determine if solar could reduce your costs.
- ▶ Understand how net metering and parallel generation works.
- ▶ Avoid buying an unnecessarily large (and costly) system that may never recoup its investment.

While individual systems may offset a member's usage, they also reduce the co-op's expected revenue used to maintain and operate the electric system — potentially shifting costs to other members. 4 Rivers has invested in two 1-megawatt utility-scale solar arrays that provide cost savings to all members through lower wholesale cost per kilowatt and by shaving the co-op's overall peak demand.

At 4 Rivers, our goal is to help members make informed, financially sound energy decisions — while protecting system reliability and keeping costs fair and reasonable for everyone.

Thinking about solar? Start by calling our member services team. We're here to help you make the best decision.