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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

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Mark Doebele
Assistant General Manager/COO

Roger Cole
CFO

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Manager of Member and Corporate Services

FROM THE ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

4 Rivers Has a Focus on Safety

During my career working for electric cooperatives, safety has always been priority No. 1 when it came to preparing a list of goals for the year. The trustees and general manager of 4 Rivers support the necessary training and practices required to achieve a safe work environment. It is easy to write "Safety is our No. 1 goal!" on paper, but it requires trust, support, communication, training, and participation by the entire team to meet this goal. Today I thought I would note a few things that your cooperative does to create a safe work environment.

- ▶ Our linemen work on power lines energized up to 7,200 volts every day. Crews are required to put a circuit being repaired on non-reclose to limit our exposure to an arc flash if an accident should occur. Linemen participate in statewide training events to learn new techniques and procedures. We train apprentices for three years to learn the safe, yet efficient, ways of completing their work.
- ▶ Linemen are required to recertify annually by performing techniques proving they can safely rescue a fellow lineman if they should become disabled while working atop a pole or in a bucket. We practice two separate techniques for this training. The first is to climb up the pole and lower a 175-pound mannequin by rope to

the ground. It sounds easier than what it really is, controlling the weight and not causing yourself or the victim additional harm is the challenge. The second requires the use of a bucket truck using the same mannequin in the bottom of the bucket. Our bucket trucks can be operated from the bucket or the controls located at the base of the pedestal. They lower the bucket close to the ground and tilt the bucket horizontally, allowing them to pull the mannequin out from the bottom of the bucket. The process needs to be accomplished swiftly, safely (for themselves and the victim) and with confidence.

- ▶ Linemen do not need to climb to accomplish most of their "normal" work these days, as we have aerial buckets that allow us to complete the work much more efficiently and with less wear and tear on the body. There are times that climbing is still necessary, so to hedge our bets on a successful and safe climb up and back down, we require our linemen to use fall-restraint lanyards. If a lineman slips and falls while climbing a pole, the fall restraint is required to stop the fall within 2 feet.



Mark Doebele

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Your Co-op Team - The Final 4

From lineworkers to member service representatives to managers, your 4 Rivers team is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, cost-effective electric service to our membership. These four co-op team members, who go above and beyond to serve you, will complete our employee spotlight feature. We have enjoyed introducing our co-op team to you!

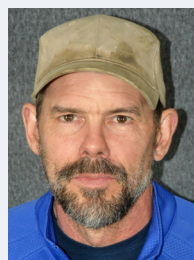


Cash Baker

CASH BAKER has worked for the cooperative since 2014 and serves the members as a journeyman lineman in the south district where he helps build and maintain overhead and underground distribution lines. As a lineman, he enjoys working overhead in the bucket and appreciates what he has learned over the years from the older crew members who are willing to share their knowledge and experience.

Cash grew up in Thayer and currently lives in rural Neodesha with his wife, Angela. He enjoys hunting deer and coyote and takes pride in his cattle operation and watching them go through the sale ring. He likes the outdoors and vacationing in the Colorado mountains. He looks forward to raising a family and is inspired by his parents who are some of the hardest workers he knows and always provided abundantly for their children.

Cash wants our members to know that we will do what we can to help and serve them. We appreciate Cash's dedication to our members and diligence in building and maintain our infrastructure.



Terry Lyon

TERRY LYON is a service technician who performs heavy duty mechanic work and has been with the cooperative for four years. He takes care of the cooperative fleet vehicles, keeping them maintained and repaired when necessary. He appreciates that his daily duties vary in his position, and the days always bring something different that needs attention.

When he started working on power line equipment in 1996, the systems were simple, but over the years that changed with more functionality, added safety devices and a shift from hydraulic mechanisms toward more electric components.

Terry lives in Lyon County, and he and his wife of nearly 28 years, Gina, have two daughters, a son, and four grandkids. He keeps busy with work and does not have a lot of free time, but when given the opportunity, he enjoys fishing, hunting, camping, four-wheeling and woodworking. He looks forward to learning to slow down and enjoy life someday.

Thanks to Terry for keeping our fleet safely rolling to serve our members.



Bill Parker

BILL PARKER has worked for the cooperative for 14 years and serves as cost accountant and dispatcher. He tracks costs associated with work orders completed by the line crew, as well as dispatching outages and other service needs to the crews daily. He enjoys interacting and working alongside colleagues and the opportunities to engage and assist members. He is task-driven and like to complete his duties, which are never lacking. He is amazed by the

tech advancements in the industry over the years and continued growth in electrical generation.

Bill was raised in Medicine Lodge and currently lives in New Strawn with

his wife of 27 years, Devra, with whom he has a daughter, Kate; two sons, Eli and Noah; and two granddaughters, Parker and Addison, all of whom make him very proud. He is inspired by and thankful for his father's strong work ethic and his mother's kindness. He enjoys fishing, playing cards with family, being outdoors and working on/fixing things. Serving as a member of the housing authority, Bill enjoys seeing the positive contributions to his home county. He looks forward to traveling more, visiting family whenever possible, and someday having more time to find inspiration to create art.

The cooperative has taught Bill that working as a team is always a benefit to everyone involved. As a member of 4 Rivers himself, he thinks it's important to serve the membership the way he would want to be served — always striving to offer the best service possible. We appreciate Bill's commitment to serving the cooperative's members.



Zack Peak

ZACK PEAK joined the cooperative in 2005 and serves as the safety and line manager, coordinating outside operations and the cooperative's safety program. He enjoys working with the co-op's members and crews and appreciates all he has learned from the older linemen over the years. During his time in the industry, he has seen many improvements in the safety of line work with better equipment and technology to keep workers safe.

Zack was raised in rural Emporia and resides there with his wife, Amber, and their two children, Hadley and Porter. He is inspired by his parents and their strong work ethic. He enjoys hunting and spending time with his family, especially traveling and being outdoors, and looks forward to the day when he has more free time to travel and be on his own schedule.

He wants our members to know that we work for them and strive to take care of them in the best way every day, especially during times of outage when crews work as quickly as possible to restore power safely. Many thanks to Zack for his years of service to the cooperative and helping keep the power on and our employees and members safe.

Proper Rest, Using '4 A' Method Can Improve Harvest Safety

Farming requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest makes a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful,

and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other Sleep Health Tips Include:

- ▶ Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- ▶ Limit electronic device use.
- ▶ Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Feeling stressed this harvest season? WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Breakdowns. Long hours. Setbacks.

There is no way to predict what harvest will bring.

Have your PLAN in place to manage your stress for a safe and healthy harvest.

P **Prepare for the Season**
With preparation, some stress can be avoided. Anticipate the demands of harvest and plan ahead. For example, prep healthy meals, fuel equipment and perform routine maintenance ahead of schedule. What can you do to prepare?

L **Lean on Loved Ones**
Seeking support from others rather than taking on everything yourself can help reduce stress. Text or call a friend or family member when you need support.
Whom can you lean on?

A **Activate Coping Mechanisms**
Coping mechanisms can help manage stress. They include engaging in physical activity, finding ways to make yourself laugh and carving out time for hobbies. Which coping mechanisms will you use?

N **Nip Negative Self-Talk**
Negative self-talk leads to decreased morale and feelings of hopelessness. When your inner critic nags, be kind to yourself and remember thoughts are not reality. How will you tell your inner critic to take a hike?

Need immediate assistance?
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

CONTENT DEVELOPED BY JOSIE M. RUDOLPHI AND COURTNEY CUTHBERTSON, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb, while watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



Happy Labor Day

In observance of Labor Day,
our office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6.



4 Rivers Has a Focus on Safety *Continued from page 16A ►*

- All employees attend bi-annual first-aid, CPR and AED refresher training. AEDs are kept in our utility trucks and offices.
- We have purchased an assortment of lightweight battery-operated tools to help save lineworkers' backs, shoulders and wrists. These tools are used to bore holes in a pole and tighten hardware.
- Our linemen wear fire resistant clothing to help protect their bodies in case they should find themselves near an arc flash.
- 4 Rivers employees operate heavy equipment on state and local roads daily. We inspect these vehicles before driving, and all vehicles and trailers are DOT certified annually. Linemen of yesteryear had to work much harder in less safe conditions, and their bodies were worn out when retirement came around. Today we accomplish the same work by working smarter with new technology and safer by keeping a focus on safety.



Each year, 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative linemen participate in pole top rescue training. This training ensures each lineman knows how to safely help a person in need who is up in the air on a utility pole.

Managing Rights of Way from Top to Bottom

The vegetation management work that electric cooperatives and their contractors do to keep electric lines and equipment separated from plant overgrowth plays a major role in service reliability.

From mowing and brush work at ground level to tree trimming near or above power lines, Kansas electric cooperatives regularly inspect and manage the landscape in and around their equipment to prevent outages, minimize threat of fire damage and maintain access and serviceability.

Utility providers, including electric cooperatives, work with local, state and federal foresters to develop integrated vegetation management practices aimed at reducing the need for chemicals, costly manual and mechanical control measures and controlled burning.

These techniques establish low-growing vegetation that out-compete taller-growing species, according to experts at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA worked with utility industry associations and other federal agencies to develop Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices.

An IVM approach can help create sustainable ecosystems such as a meadow transition habitat. The techniques, used for both roadside and cross-country rights of way, encourage the growth of native plant species and increase plant diversity. They also create or restore habitat for local and migrating wildlife, including insects, birds and mammals.

"Trees and other vegetation grow relentlessly," said Randall H. Miller, a vegetation management consultant based in Des Moines, Iowa.

While weather conditions can affect seasonal activities related to right-of-way work and vegetation management, electric co-ops and other utilities regularly conduct maintenance to mitigate risks.

"Vegetation management that is deferred one year has to be done in

the future, and the cost accrues much faster than inflation," said Miller, who serves on the ROW Stewardship Council. "As biomass develops due to growth and trees encroach on, or even engulf power lines, they become increasingly more difficult and less safe to work."

While some of the work might be done with brush hogs, mowers and chain saws, electric co-ops also rely heavily upon planning, seeding and strategic planting, often supported by their consumer-members and other stakeholders. Youth and community groups regularly work with co-ops on plans to enhance or adapt rights of way to support and sustain wildlife or provide forage and habitat for migratory species.

Kansas electric cooperatives regularly share information and updates on local vegetation management efforts to keep the public safe and communicate how tree and plant growth trimming increases service reliability.

"Communication is indispensable to successful vegetation management programs," said Miller. "Stakeholders need to understand how vegetation management will benefit them, and that includes education on how a vegetation management program minimizes the risk of tree-caused power outages." According to industry research, about 20-30% of all power outages are vegetation-related.

Removal of tall trees and limbs near power lines also reduces the risk of injuries from accidental contact with energized power lines. "Vegetation planning and management should include the concept of 'right tree, right place' and that there is no room for tall trees to develop under power lines," said Miller.

"Planting them there means those trees cannot be allowed to reach their full potential and will have to be either removed or, if retained, continually pruned to keep clear of the conductors," Miller said.