

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

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

CURRENTS

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Board of Trustees

Michael Springer
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Robert Converse
Vice-President

Gene Huston
Secretary

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Treasurer

Tom Ayers
Trustee

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Trustee

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Trustee

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Trustee

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Trustee

Stacy Heins
Trustee

David Kunkel
Trustee

Warren Schmidt
Trustee

Sandy Smith
Trustee

Carol Wehmeyer
Trustee

Staff

Dennis Svanes
General Manager/CEO

Mark Doebele
Assistant General Manager/COO

Roger Cole
CFO

Ken Caudell
Manager of Member and Corporate Services

FROM THE MANAGER

Co-op Retiring Over \$778,000 in Capital Credits to Members

In previous months, I have discussed the Seven Cooperative Principles.

- ▶ 1. Voluntary and Open Membership
- ▶ 2. Democratic Member Control
- ▶ 3. Member's Economic Participation
- ▶ 4. Autonomy and Independence
- ▶ 5. Education, Training, and Information
- ▶ 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
- ▶ 7. Concern for Community

The third principle, Member's Economic Participation, involves how our electric cooperative accounts for margins (profit) differently than other entities. As a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, we allocate margins to all our members based on a percentage of what a member uses in that year. This becomes the members' equity (also referenced as capital credits or patronage) in the cooperative. That equity helps us fund our facilities along with debt to capitalize our system.

The other half of the equation is the

retirement of that equity. The board of trustees authorized the retirement of a little over \$778,000 at the October board meeting. We received a little over \$66,000 from Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), which is the generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative from which we purchase power. That G&T retirement will be included with the co-op's general retirement and passed through to the 4 Rivers membership.

What is the average amount a member will receive in the retirement? The simple answer is that the average is irrelevant to how much individuals should anticipate receiving. The years included in the retirement are 1990 and older. Eligibility for receiving a general retirement depends on whether some-

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Dennis Svanes



Our office will be closed Thursday, Dec. 24, Friday, Dec. 25, and Friday, Jan. 1, 2021, in observance of the holidays.

Co-op Month Photo Contest Winners Announced



First place: Winter Barn by Michael Hoag from Waverly.

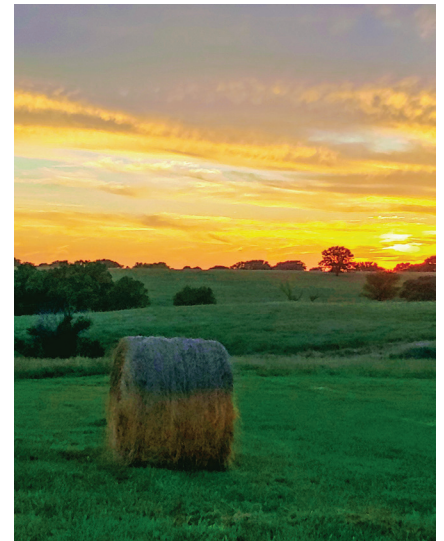
Thank you to all our members who participated in our photo contest for Co-op Month!

We received many great entries highlighting our beautiful service territory. Our winning submissions received a bill credit and are featured in this month's edition of *Kansas Country Living Magazine*.

- ▶ First place: Winter Barn by **MICHAEL HOAG** from Waverly — \$75 bill credit.
- ▶ Second place: Flowers in the Autumn Sun by **PAM WALKER** from Altoona — \$50 bill credit.
- ▶ Third place: Sunset by **AMY PIERSOL** from Williamsburg — \$25 bill credit.



Second place: Flowers in the Autumn Sun by Pam Walker from Altoona.



Third place: Sunset by Amy Piersol from Williamsburg.

Co-op Retiring Over \$778,000 in Capital Credits to Members *Continued from page 16A* ▶

one was a member during those years, how much patronage the member had during an individual year, what the margins were in those years, etc.

For active members, the general retirement will be applied as a credit to electric bills issued in December. For former members included in the retirement, checks will be issued to

the last known mailing address we have for that member. For this reason, we always encourage members to keep their current mailing address and phone number updated with us even after leaving our service territory.

As we near the holiday season, I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Your Co-op Team

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. Meet three co-op team members who go above and beyond to serve you.



Matt Hopkins

MATT HOPKINS is a line foreman and has been with the cooperative for 15 years, starting with Lyon-Coffey. He has seen many changes, most notably the improvement of tools and equipment. He enjoys new challenges and loves problem solving, which he does frequently while overseeing an electric crew daily.

Hopkins and his wife, Amanda, live in Lebo where they recently built a new home. They have three children Brayden, 12; Brycen, 9; and Brylee, 4; who keep the couple busy watching them participate in many sports including football, basketball, baseball and wrestling. He enjoys fishing and hunting in his spare time, as well as cheering on the Kansas State Wildcats. Hopkins says he is inspired by his wife, "Amanda has a huge heart and puts everyone before herself."

He would like our consumer-members to know that he and his fellow linemen strive every day to make 4 Rivers the best cooperative possible. Thanks to Matt for his continued efforts in making 4 Rivers Cooperative thrive.



Larry McVey

LARRY MCVEY started working for Radiant Electric in 1988 and serves as operations supervisor, overseeing construction and maintenance of the electrical system in the south district. He

enjoys the people with whom he works and appreciates having time in the field and in the office as a part of his position.

He was raised outside of Coyville, Kansas, and raised his family there. His wife, Kathy, is a retired kindergarten teacher; and his kids, Bradley and Amy, both returned to the community after college and live there with their spouses. The McVey's have four beautiful grandkids who they love spending time with on the family farm. Farming and cattle ranching take up most of his time outside of work, but he also enjoys boating, water-skiing and riding four-wheelers. He is inspired by his parents, who taught him about hard work, love and loyalty, and he is very proud of his family.

He appreciates the improvements in the industry over the years. Equipment is safer and more efficient; and the technology has changed a lot. He has a lot of great memories with the crew over the years, including traveling to provide mutual aid after storms and lots of laughs along the way. He wants our consumer-members to know that our co-op employees really try to take care of our membership and give them the best service we can. Thanks to Larry for his continued service to our cooperative consumer-members over the years.



Rita Huntington

RITA HUNTINGTON is a customer service representative in our Emporia location and enjoys assisting consumer-members. She began working for Lyon-Coffey Electric in 2005 when they owned and operated Neosho Valley Energy until 2010 and was happily welcomed back to the co-op family in 2016. Rita enjoys customer service and the satisfaction of helping people, saying her position "keeps you busy with day to day challenges that can be very rewarding and never boring, as no two days are alike." She enjoys getting to know our consumer-members, their concerns and appreciation.

Huntington grew up in Eureka and moved to Emporia in 1980 for extended schooling. She and her husband, Justin, who is also from Eureka, have been married for 38 years. She felt blessed to live close to her grandparents in the country for a big part of her life and enjoyed helping where she could on the farm. Huntington said her grandparents were such an inspiration to their entire family; she is very proud to have some of their heirlooms, which are now 100 years old, from when her grandparents got married in 1920.

Leisure outings and day trips visiting museums, antique stores and dining out in Kansas are things she enjoys.

Getting to know and work with co-workers who all have the same goal of moving forward to where we can better serve our consumer-members is of utmost importance. Thanks to Rita for her dedication to consumer-member satisfaction.

Think ‘Smart’ This Holiday Season and Save Money Year-Round

This holiday season think “smart” and consider giving a loved one (or yourself) a gift that keeps on giving. Many smart devices reduce home energy use, which can put a little more jingle in your pocket.

Consider these five energy-saving smart gadgets while shopping this holiday season:

- ▶ **SMART THERMOSTATS** learn users’ schedules and the temperatures they prefer to keep in their home. They remember these temperatures while a home is occupied and adjusts to a more energy-saving setting when the home is not to avoid heating and cooling an empty home. Smart thermostats also feature apps that let family members change the temperature from anywhere in the world using a phone or other mobile device. Owners may also use the app to see how much energy is used and why, and then use that information to adjust their home energy usage.
- ▶ **SMART LIGHTING** saves energy in multiple ways. Smart lightbulbs last longer and use less power. Smart lighting systems also have scheduled timers and allow you to remotely turn off the lights (a great feature if you have loved ones who constantly leave the lights on).
- ▶ **VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS**, like Siri or Alexa, can connect to smart thermostats, smart lights, entertainment center devices and others. With a few spoken words, virtual assistants can turn lights, appliances and other devices off and on, activate and deactivate security systems, shut or open a garage door, and more. These home automation devices allow homeowners to control their appliances and create daily smart-home routines through smartphone apps, creating many new ways to save energy. For example, owners can schedule kitchen appliances, such as dishwashers and coffee makers, to run while they are out of the house or to operate at a specific time every day. Virtual assistants can even schedule smart appliances to start during off-peak hours, when energy demand is lower.
- ▶ **THERMAL LEAK DETECTORS** use infrared sensors to detect energy-draining drafts so they can be repaired (filled) to make your home more energy-efficient. Thermal imaging accessories now exist for smart phones as well, converting them into lightweight, portable thermal leak detectors. Repairing thermal leaks in a home can save up to 20% in heating and cooling costs.
- ▶ **SMART POWER STRIPS AND SURGE PROTECTORS** are a less expensive option to gain some smart technology without upgrading all appliances and devices to smart models. For smarter devices that can be used independently of an all-smart home, the strips can detect when such a device is in standby mode and cut its power supply. Using smart power strips can reduce a home’s overall energy usage, which equates to savings on your energy bill.

Cold Weather Accommodation

As provided in the cooperative’s rules and regulations, the provisions of the Cold Weather Accommodation allow a qualifying residential member the opportunity to retain electric service throughout the cold weather period, which extends from Nov. 15 through March 15.

The cooperative will not disconnect a member’s service between Nov. 15 and March 15 when the local National Weather Service office forecasts the temperature will drop below 35 degrees Fahrenheit within the following 24-hour period unless:

- ▶ a) it is at the member’s request;
- ▶ b) the service is abandoned;
- ▶ c) a dangerous condition exists on the member’s premises;
- ▶ d) the member violates any rule of the cooperative which adversely affects the safety of the member or other persons, or the physical integrity of the cooperative’s delivery system;
- ▶ e) the member causes or permits unauthorized interference with, or tampering of as defined in Section 3-A-4-c of the rules and regulations, the electric service situated or delivered on or about the member’s premises;
- ▶ f) the member misrepresents his or her identity for the purpose of obtaining or retaining electric service; or
- ▶ g) the member tenders an insufficient funds check as the initial payment or an installment payment under an arrearage payment plan and does not cure the insufficient payment, including the returned check charge during the 10-day period after a disconnection notice is sent to the member.

Under (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) above, the cooperative may disconnect the service immediately. Under (f) above, the cooperative may disconnect the service two (2) days after a disconnection is provided to the member of record or 10 days after a disconnection notice is sent, whichever is quicker. Under (g) above, the cooperative may disconnect the service 10 days after a disconnection notice is provided if that member has not cured the insufficient payment during that 10-day period.

The day prior to disconnection, the cooperative may make at least one telephone call attempt with the member of record or make one attempt at a personal contact with the member of record on the day prior to termination of service.

Prepay Power Program participants are not eligible for Cold Weather Accommodation; however, members can work with the cooperative to stay connected with reasonable payment arrangements if needed.

Budget Billing Update

Consumer-members enrolled in budget billing will receive their updated budget amounts this month. The adjusted amount was noted on the bills issued in November. If you are interested in signing up for budget billing, give one of our member service representatives a call at 620-364-2116.