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4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
CURRENTS

FROM THE MANAGER

4 Rivers Electric Celebrates Anniversary


Dennis Svanes

Happy New Year! January marks 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative's first co-op anniversary. Certainly, 2020 was not the year anyone expected due to the pandemic. As we move into 2021, I am hopeful for a more normalized way of doing business and living life than the prior year presented us.

We are very excited for the construction of our solar facilities. They are scheduled to be online by late spring. Each of the solar farms will have 1.4 MW of panels installed but will be limited to 1 MW of output at any given time. This allows for a couple of things. Solar panels degrade over time. Putting in additional panels will allow the system to last for over 25 years with the 1 MW output. It also allows us to make sure we generate at full capacity during our peak times. The solar panels will be situated on a single-axis tracking system. This means the panels will track from east to west throughout the day, following the sun and maximizing our harvest of the solar rays and subsequent power generation.

While solar systems may seem simple, there is specialized engineering involved. Solar systems generate DC power and inverters convert it to AC power. This conversion can create power quality problems, so we will install a specific type of transformer to prevent those issues.

Additionally, we use smart breakers to make sure that the system does not generate onto the grid if there is not enough load needing it (usage on the lines) and prevent the systems from pushing back on the transmission system owned by another entity.

Today's Power started construction at our Studebaker site, next to our Fredonia office. They are installing the framework, which is approximately 8 feet in the ground. It needs to stand up to Kansas winds, which we all know can blow very hard at times.

While this past year was a very challenging year, I am thankful for all the hard work the 4 Rivers employees did to manage and overcome these challenges to continue serving you, the members of 4 Rivers. Happy New Year!

PHOTO ABOVE IS THE VERDIGRIS RIVER NEAR ALTOONA IN WILSON COUNTY TAKEN BY A 4 RIVERS MEMBER. WE APPRECIATE OUR MEMBERS' PHOTO SUBMISSIONS FROM OUR BEAUTIFUL COOPERATIVE TERRITORY.

Ground Breaks on 4 Rivers Sun Farms

Representatives from Today's Power, Inc. joined 4 Rivers Electric trustees and staff to break ground on a new solar farm. From left: TPI's Learon Dalby; Trustees Tom Ayers, Carol Wehmeyer and Larry Felts; General Manager/CEO Dennis Svanes; Trustee Michael Springer; Assistant General Manager/COO Mark Doebele; Trustees Sandy Smith and Nick Frankenbery; and TPI's Keaghan Economon.

Small Investment Yields Direct Savings for Consumer-Members

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. joins 11 other rural electric cooperatives in Kansas to invest in 20 megawatts (MW) of solar power to be installed across 800 miles of the state and power 80,000 homes in rural Kansas.

4 Rivers Electric's portion of the project consists of two sun farms sized at 1 MW each. Preliminary work has already started on the two tracts of land acquired for the project by 4 Rivers Electric. Construction should be completed by June 2021.

One 4 Rivers Electric 1-MW sun farm will be located just southeast of Fredonia near the 4 Rivers office along Highway 400, while the other will be built about 8 miles north of Emporia at 4 Rivers' Americus substation.

Today's Power Inc. (TPI), a North Little Rock-based company created by rural electric cooperatives in Arkansas, will develop and own the two 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative sun farms and the other arrays in Kansas. Over the past five years in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, Today's Power Inc. has successfully installed more than 25 solar projects totaling more than 40 megawatts. A solar power service agreement (SPSA) with Today's Power Inc. has been signed by 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative to purchase the solar energy generated by the two arrays for the next 25 years. This type of agreement ensures that the cooperative is not at risk or liable for the ongoing costs associated with the solar system's maintenance and operation.

All the participating Kansas rural electric cooperatives were able to negotiate very favorable long-term rates by working together in the Kansas Cooperative Sun Power Program. In addition, in the design process, the solar arrays will be customized to optimize production during the peak demand hours of the cooperative, when electricity is most costly.

These variables assist 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative in stabilizing the cost of electricity and keeping power affordable for those served at the 12,477 meter locations of the cooperative.

"We are excited to work with Today's Power to install utility-scale solar, which is the most beneficial way to install solar generation. These projects will help control costs for our members for many years to come," says 4 Rivers General Manager/CEO Dennis Svanes.

National data shows that solar power in the country is increasing rapidly. 4 Rivers Electric has around 45 members using solar panels installed on their own property and interconnected to the electric system. By investing in these two large arrays, 4 Rivers ensures that the clean, affordable power generated benefits all 4 Rivers consumer-members, not just those who place panels on their homes.

4 Rivers Electric's investment in solar is just one more way the cooperative works to lower our demand during peak hours and control the cost of power.

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LIEAP Benefits — Do You Qualify?

Application period open

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 2021 LIEAP application period is now open, and applications must be received online or in a Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) office by 5 p.m., March 31, 2021, to be considered for eligibility. All applications received after the deadline will be denied.

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 130% 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.

2021 LIEAP Income Eligibility Guidelines

Maximum Gross Monthly Income for Persons Living at the Address

1	$1,383	7	$4,295
2	$1,868	8	$4,780
3	$2,353	9	$5,265
4	$2,839	10	$5,751
5	$3,324	11	$6,236
6	$3,809	12	$6,721

+1 $486 for each additional person

Traditional Youth Trip Canceled; Virtual Options Being Explored

The Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. Board of Trustees voted to cancel all out-of-state youth programs for 2021 at its Dec. 3 meeting.

Therefore, the 2021 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., and the 2021 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Colorado have been canceled.

Instead, KEC staff will begin organizing a virtual youth leadership opportunity. 4 Rivers will keep you updated on further developments.

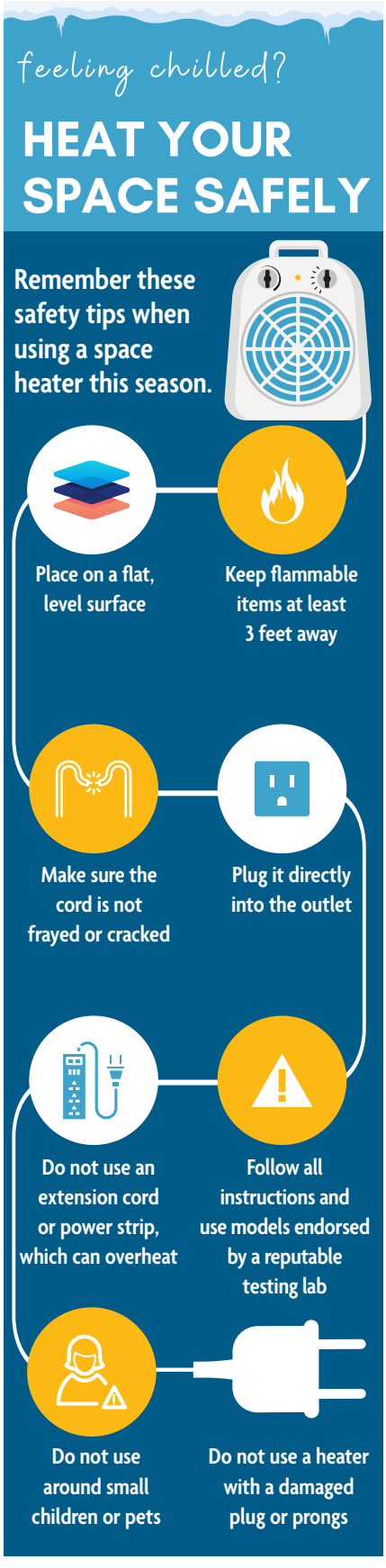
Winter Weather Can Bring Power Lines Down

Stay Where You Are

You've just been in an accident involving a downed power line. Your first instinct might be to get out and run, but that could cost you your life. In most cases, the safest place to be is inside your vehicle. Wait until electric utility workers de-energize the power. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, escape as safely as possible by jumping out without touching the vehicle and hopping away with both feet together as far as you can. Warn others not to approach the scene.

You Should Know:

- Downed power lines are extremely dangerous and even deadly.
- Electric current can travel through the ground and anything touching the ground.
- Stray voltage spreads like ripples on a pond.
- If you step from one "ripple" (voltage) to another, you could be electrocuted.
- Downed lines could be hiding under standing water, ice or debris.



Time to Ditch Your Old Space Heater

If you cannot remember when you purchased your space heater, it might be time to replace it. Just as the flip phones of yesteryear have progressed into today's modern cellphone, portable space heaters have come a long way too.

Most of today's models have built-in safety features, such as non-exposed coils and sensors that detect overheating or touch, as well as an automatic shut-off feature in case it gets tipped over.

Regardless of whether your space heater is fresh out of the box or several years old, it should be used safely. Most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve using one, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires, right behind cooking.

Along with using a unit that is in good working order, be sure to keep clothing, papers, rugs and other flammable items at least 3 feet away from a space heater. More than half of the heating-related home fires start when items are too close to the heat source, according to the NFPA, including upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

Safe Electricity and 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative recommend these additional space heater safety tips:

- Read all instructions and only use as recommended.
- Do not leave a space heater unattended.
- Plug it directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater cycling on and off.
- Unplug any other item from the outlet you are using; also try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
- Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.

Always use a space heater with care. Visit SafeElectricity.org for additional safety tips.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load). **SOURCE: WWW.NREL.GOV**