

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

Northern District  
2731 Milo Terr.  
Lebo, KS 66856

Southern District  
9346 Jewell Road  
Fredonia, KS 66736

Payment Center  
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.

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



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## FROM THE MANAGER

# National Co-op Month Highlights Benefits of Membership



Dennis Svanes

October is National Co-op Month, a time to celebrate the many benefits of cooperatives and the cooperative principles that guide them. Electric

cooperatives are one type of cooperative that provides electricity to millions of people in rural and urban areas across the United States.

Electric cooperatives are member owned. This means that our “customers” are more than just customers, they are owners and have a say in how the cooperative is run. This is done through electing our board of trustees.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations. 4 Rivers’ goal is to provide reliable and affordable electricity, not to make a profit. Any margins we have are allocated back to our members based upon the patronage of each member (how much energy a member purchases).

Electric cooperatives are community focused. 4 Rivers is committed to serving our communities and being responsive to the needs of our members.

The Seven Cooperative Principles are the foundation of electric cooperatives and guide our operations:

### 1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP:

Electric cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people who

*Continued on page 12C*

## Join Us For a Co-op Month Tailgate!

We are grilling up hot dogs before the game — stop by and say hello!

- ▶ **THURSDAY, OCT. 5 AT 6 P.M.**  
Lebo Wolves vs. Hartford Jaguars at Hartford
- ▶ **FRIDAY, OCT. 13 AT 5:30 P.M.**  
Southern Coffey County Titans vs Altoona-Midway Jets at Altoona-Midway

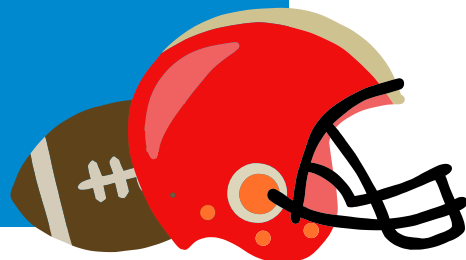


PHOTO ABOVE, “CO-OP SUNSET,” WAS TAKEN BY MEMBER BRENDAN COULTER OF FALL RIVER. THE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS THE BEAUTY OF OUR COOPERATIVE TERRITORY.

## Conservation is Key to Fall Electric Savings

As the crisp breeze of autumn swirls the leaves, energy conservation becomes an important consideration for many households. Here are the top 10 ways to save electricity during the fall season.

- ▶ **MAXIMIZE NATURAL LIGHT:** Make the most of the daylight hours, keeping curtains and blinds open to let in natural light.
- ▶ **LAYER UP:** Instead of cranking up the heat, bundle up in warm clothes or with blankets to keep cozy.
- ▶ **UNPLUG ELECTRONICS:** Phantom energy draw from devices left plugged in can add up. Always unplug unused appliances.
- ▶ **THERMOSTAT MANAGEMENT:** Lower your thermostat by a few degrees when you are out or asleep. A programmable thermostat can make this effortless.
- ▶ **REGULAR MAINTENANCE:** Servicing your heating system can ensure it runs efficiently, consuming less power.
- ▶ **ENERGY-EFFICIENT APPLIANCES:** Consider upgrading to appliances with Energy Star ratings. They may cost more upfront but can save in the long run.
- ▶ **SEAL DRAFTS:** Weather strip doors and windows to prevent heat loss, improving energy efficiency.
- ▶ **LIMIT SPACE HEATER USE:** Space heaters can be energy hogs. Use them sparingly and only in smaller spaces.
- ▶ **LED LIGHT BULBS:** Switch to LED bulbs. They are more efficient and last longer than traditional bulbs.
- ▶ **INSULATION:** Ensure your home is well insulated to keep the warmth in and cold out, minimizing the need for excessive heating.

By adopting these practices, not only will you conserve electricity and save on your energy bills, but you'll also contribute to a healthier planet. Remember, every little bit helps, so start implementing these tips and see the difference this fall.

## Playing It Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders for employees and members.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

- ▶ **IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (ALSO KNOWN AS TWO-STEP VERIFICATION) ON YOUR ACCOUNTS.** The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.
- ▶ **UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

- ▶ **THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK.** Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cybercriminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.
- ▶ **CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS, USING LONG, UNIQUE AND COMPLEX WORDS OR PHRASES.** Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

### For the Young People in Your Household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

### Keeping the Electric Grid and Your Data Secure

Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For 4 Rivers Electric Co-op, reliability means repairing wear and tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and proven practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the state in protecting our infrastructure. We learn from each other to keep the grid's network secure. While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.

# National Co-op Month Highlights

## Benefits of Membership Continued from page 12A

are willing to use their services and accept the responsibilities of membership.

**2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Electric cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, one member, one vote. Members have the right to vote for the board of directors, participate in decision-making, and hold the cooperative accountable.

**3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Electric cooperatives are owned by their members, and members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This means that members have a vested interest in the success of the cooperative and are motivated to make it a success.

**4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Electric cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. They are not subject to control by outside organizations, such as governments or businesses. This allows them to make decisions that are in the best interests of their members.

**5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Electric cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. This helps to ensure that everyone involved in the cooperative

understands its mission and principles and is able to participate effectively in its operations.

**6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Electric cooperatives work together to achieve common goals. This can include sharing resources, providing mutual assistance, and collaborating on marketing and other activities. Cooperation Among Cooperatives strengthens the cooperative movement and allows them to better serve their members.

**7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** Electric cooperatives are committed to improving the quality of life in their communities. They support local charities, sponsor community events, and invest in projects that benefit the community. This commitment to community is one of the things that makes electric cooperatives unique.

We hope you will join us in celebrating the benefits of electric cooperatives during National Co-op Month! We are coordinating a couple of tailgating events for a local football games. Keep an eye on our Facebook page to learn more.



## Annual Co-op Month Photo Contest

To celebrate Co-op Month we are having a photo contest to highlight 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative's beautiful service territory. Enter the contest at [www.4riverselectric.com](http://www.4riverselectric.com) or send your entry to [april.engstrom@4riverselectric.com](mailto:april.engstrom@4riverselectric.com) **BY OCT. 31, 2023.**

- ▶ Must be copyright owned by the individual person entering the image.
- ▶ Photos may include 4 Rivers employees at work, but no individual residents.
- ▶ By participating, you agree to give 4 Rivers permission to use your photos.
- ▶ Must be a consumer-member of 4 Rivers Electric.
- ▶ Include name, address, contact info and photo title with your submission.
- ▶ Photos must be taken in 4 Rivers service territory.
- ▶ Limit two photo submissions per member.
- ▶ AI generated photos will not be accepted for this contest.

**FIRST PLACE**  
\$100 bill credit  
**SECOND PLACE**  
\$75 bill credit  
**THIRD PLACE**  
\$50 bill credit

# Share Information That Saves Lives

## National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 15-21

Eight people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October, which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines.

### Distracted Driving

There were 3,522 people killed by distracted driving in 2021\*, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lead by example and, as the NSC touts, “just drive.”

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Other

distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage or using an app.

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.
2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel. LifeSaver is one of many apps that activates to block text notifications and disables certain phone features while the car is in motion.
3. Do not eat while you drive.
4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.

### Downed Power Lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/poles and pad-mounted transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- ▶ The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.
- ▶ If you walk or run from one voltage “ripple” to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).
- ▶ If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).
- ▶ Your body becomes electricity’s path to ground when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

### What to Do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 911 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other electrical safety tips at [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

\*2022 STATISTICS NOT AVAILABLE AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE.

