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4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# CURRENTS

# 4 RIVERS

## Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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### FROM THE MANAGER

## Cost-of-Service Study Analyzes Rate Structure

4 Rivers Electric has completed a cost-of-service study (COSS) that, as the name suggests, looks at our costs to serve each rate class and the cost components within rate classes. Our COSS indicates a need to modify rates between and within rate classes.

Why do we consider this closely? We have a responsibility to you, our consumer-members, to make sure we are collecting rates as equitably as we can. Many of our operating costs are somewhat fixed, like poles, wires, substations and taxes. If we do not collect enough base fee (sometimes referred to as a service access fee or customer charge), we must charge more for the energy. Because the use of electricity varies, typically because of weather, we tend to overcollect from some rate classes and undercollect from other rate classes. It is virtually impossible to have a perfect tariff, but we can continue to make rate classes more equitable.

While we do not have the same cost structure as the telecom industry, they have experienced similar rate changes like long distance, per minute and per text charges moving to fixed costs. The difference is that energy does have a per unit cost to produce, and the highest peak days have the highest cost of production.

Some special interest groups do not like higher base charges. I was once asked, in a different state, to lower the base fee and triple the energy cost —

by a solar panel seller with selfish motivation.

As an electric cooperative, we have cost considerations instead of profit motives when we design and implement rates. Any margins are allocated back to you, the consumer-member.

Your board of trustees has reviewed the information from the COSS and continues to discuss rate options and potential rate design changes. Considering the restructure of electric rates is one of the most challenging and important tasks your cooperative board tackles.

On a different topic, I continue to receive questions about net metering — i.e., solar. While net metered solar is not bad, if someone is considering it because they wish to save money, it most likely will not. We encourage you to save your money and invest in energy efficiency. Energy-efficiency measures pay for themselves quickly and are long-term solutions. Examples of energy efficiency are LED lightbulbs, insulation, insulation for water pipes, efficient doors and windows, Energy Star appliances, and more efficient heating and cooling systems.

Installing solar is not energy efficiency. It is simply changing the source of power. On behalf of our members, 4 Rivers installed a large, utility-scale solar array, that allows us to provide renewable energy to members and take advantage of economies of scale.



Dennis Svanes

## 4 Rivers Students Attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

The 45th Annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC), held July 15-21 near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, hosted 62 student leaders from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming. These high schoolers were sponsored by a total of 31 participating electric cooperatives across the four states.

**ELIZABETH and EMILY KELLEY**, twin sisters from rural Emporia and seniors at Hartford High School, represented 4 Rivers Electric at the week-long leadership camp. The Kelleys are very active in their school and recognize the importance of stepping up as leaders especially in our rural communities. The Kelleys were selected by 4 Rivers based on their leadership skills, academic achievements, extracurricular activities and character demonstrated in their applications and interviews.

During the camp, students learned how an electric cooperative is organized and operated by developing a model cooperative. Campers elected a board of directors, appointed a general manager, established committees, and attended daily membership meetings. Camp participants also attended educational seminars on leadership,

online reputation management, conflict management, and co-op careers, in addition to presentations on high voltage electricity, raptors and avian protection with HawkQuest, and a tour of the Yampa Valley Electric community solar array.

“What inspired me on this trip was the leadership shown from the ambassadors,” Elizabeth said. “They stepped in and made everyone feel seen, heard and special. They connected with all of us showing we didn’t have to be afraid to connect with others.”

Along with its professional development programs, CYLC included a visit to Mount Werner and downtown Steamboat Springs, whitewater rafting on the Colorado River, and other fun activities such as a volleyball tournament, swimming, talent show and a dance.

“I was inspired by how this camp changed people,” Emily said. “A week ago, it was just 75 strangers, and now we’re a family. None of us are the same as we were when we arrived.”

“4 Rivers Electric is proud to sponsor our co-op’s student leaders at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp,”



During camp, twin sisters Emily (left) and Elizabeth Kelley learned valuable leadership skills and formed new friendships with other co-op students.

General Manager/CEO Dennis Svanes said. “It is an honor to help provide students opportunities to grow in their leadership potential and develop the knowledge to further engage in our cooperative community.”

For more information on youth programs offered by the cooperative, visit [www.4riverselectric.com](http://www.4riverselectric.com).



Students from Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming gathered in the mountains near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to learn about leadership, cooperatives and other educational seminars.



# Electricity Complacency: Stay Safe on Your Ranch or Farm

Farmers and ranchers must take countless precautions to stay safe. Unfortunately, electrical hazards can be overlooked since electricity cannot be seen or heard and overhead power lines often fade into the rural landscape.

Here are some electrical safety tips to implement on your farm or ranch:

- ▶ Look for exposed energized parts and unguarded electrical equipment that could become energized unexpectedly.
- ▶ Be careful when operating watering tanks with electric pumps. Ensure irrigation systems are not spraying water into or near overhead power lines.
- ▶ Inspect electrical fencing regularly to ensure that everything is tight and secure and that no parts are frayed.
- ▶ Ensure your electric fence is well supported. A lack of support can cause it to sag, leading to animals escaping or electrical issues.
- ▶ Make sure electric fencing is visible by using electric fence tape, warning signs or other methods.
- ▶ Cap posts, especially metal T-posts, to prevent an animal (or human) from becoming impaled.
- ▶ Be aware of overhead power lines when moving hay bales.
- ▶ Be aware that tarps covering hay can come loose and blow in

heavy winds, sometimes causing an outage if the tarp gets too close or contacts a power line.

- ▶ Do not store hay bales under power lines.
- ▶ When using a generator and double throw switch, make sure they are in good working order and up to code.
- ▶ Check electrical center pivot equipment before and after use to ensure it is grounded, that the housing is protected, and the wiring is sound. This protects livestock and people.
- ▶ Regularly inspect irrigation equipment. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for inspection and maintenance.
- ▶ Always turn off the power before working on an irrigation system.
- ▶ After a storm, make sure the irrigation system is still grounded and has not been affected by lighting.
- ▶ Position irrigation pipes at least 15 feet away from power lines; store unused pipes away from power lines.
- ▶ Always be aware of overhead power line locations and use a spotter when working close to lines or poles.
- ▶ Follow safe digging procedures; call 811 to have underground utilities marked before breaking ground.

To learn more about electrical safety on the ranch or farm or in general, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Heads Up for Farm Safety

**Put safety first with alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Follow these safety guidelines when operating machinery near power lines:**

- ▶ Use a spotter when operating large machinery.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.
- ▶ Look up when moving equipment such as extending augers or raising beds of grain trucks.
- ▶ Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

**If you are in an accident and power lines are touching the vehicle, remember to:**

- ▶ **ASSUME IT'S LIVE:** Always assume downed lines are live and dangerous. Do not touch or remove the wires and warn others to stay away.
- ▶ **STAY PUT:** Unless there is a secondary emergency such as a fire, it is safer to stay inside the vehicle than to try to exit.
- ▶ **CALL 911:** Let the dispatcher know you were in an accident and you have a downed power line on your vehicle. The authorities will contact the cooperative and lineworkers will be sent to disconnect the power.
- ▶ **WARN OTHERS:** Witnesses may not notice the downed power line and try to help. Warn them to stay at least 40 feet away.

**IF THERE IS A SECONDARY EMERGENCY, SUCH AS A FIRE, AND YOU NEED TO EXIT THE VEHICLE:**

### GET READY

Avoid touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Remove loose clothing, open your door, step onto the metal frame with your feet close together and tuck your hands and elbows into your chest.

### JUMP FROM THE VEHICLE

Keep your feet together to prevent electricity from running through you.

### SHUFFLE OR HOP TO SAFETY

Shuffle slowly in short strides to maintain contact with the ground or hop with feet together until you're at least 40 feet from the downed power line.



# The Power of Preparation

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever, it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, we want to remind community members about the power of preparation. While “doomsday prepper” level of preparedness may be too much for you, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.

Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- ▶ Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio and phone chargers.

- ▶ Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- ▶ Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and ATMs may not work.
- ▶ Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- ▶ Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- ▶ Fill your car with gas.
- ▶ Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

## Caring for Vulnerable Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they do not live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make cer-

tain you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

## Keeping Four-Legged Family Members Safe

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress especially during an emergency.

- ▶ Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- ▶ Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- ▶ Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- ▶ Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications and other supplies).

At 4 Rivers Electric, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

## KEEP FOODS SAFE during and after a power outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.

### Food Safety Tips

- 1 Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- 2 Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
- 3 Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source, like a cooler with ice.



24 or 48 Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

4 Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

When in doubt, throw it out.

