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Lebo, KS 66856

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Fredonia, KS 66736

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Emporia, KS 66801

# 4 RIVERS

## Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

# 4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# CURRENTS

## FROM THE MANAGER

### Our Cooperative Mission: Serving and Caring

### 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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**Mark Doebele**  
Assistant General Manager/COO

**Roger Cole**  
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**Ken Caudell**  
Manager of Member and Corporate Services

4 Rivers is in existence to serve you, our members. The board of trustees recently held a strategic planning session in which they created the mission statement — “Serving and Caring.” This statement speaks to the heart of who we are and what we do.

Every year on the second Monday in April, electric cooperatives across the nation celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day. This year, on April 12, join us in a hearty “thank you” to those on the electric cooperative front lines.

Our linemen are the face of the co-op serving you, the membership, every day of the year. Most days, our linemen are working to maintain the system to improve reliability and power quality. However, we all know those stormy days and nights when weather conditions wreak havoc on our system. The 4 Rivers line crews go to work restoring power in the most inclement weather, often climbing 40 feet in the air and working near and with high voltage power lines to make sure our members have the electric energy they need.

Understandably, their job is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States.

The role our linemen play in serving and

caring for the membership is never more evident to me than when we have a large outage. The focus of our line crews, and every other co-op employee, shifts quickly to determine how to best care for those affected by the outage and restore power quickly and safely to our members.



Dennis Svanes

On April 12 and any time that you see a lineworker, please make sure to thank them — in a safe and socially-distanced way — for the work they do in service to our membership. I also hope you will remember the dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at 4 Rivers whose commitment to serving and caring for our members runs just as deep. I want to thank all the employees of 4 Rivers for their dedication in serving and caring for our members.

I hope you can see why the board of trustees chose “Serving and Caring” as our mission statement.

### Save the Date Saturday, May 22, 2021

#### 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative's 2021 Annual Meeting of Members

- ▶ Drive-in meeting at Burlington High School
- ▶ More info to come in May issue of *Kansas Country Living*

#### May 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

# Effects of February's Energy Emergency Continue

Electric and gas utilities across the Midwest saw a significant increase in energy use during a record-breaking cold snap in February. Individual member usage and 4 Rivers Electric's overall energy costs were significantly higher. Members experienced increased monthly electric bills due to increased usage and higher wholesale power costs. On average, 4 Rivers' residential members used over 23% more electricity in February than January.

As a distribution cooperative, 4 Rivers purchases power for our members from Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEPCo), also a not-for-profit cooperative like 4 Rivers. Our trustees and staff work closely with KEPCo to understand the impact of the wholesale costs during the energy emergency on our cooperative, which will take months to fully determine.

Variables in wholesale power costs are reflected in the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) charge, which is assessed to members as a per kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge itemized separately on your bill from other charges. The more power you use, the more the PCA affects your bill. The PCA

fluctuates based on the cost of fuel and purchased power. Some months, members may pay an additional charge for the PCA, while other months, the PCA may be a credit.

Each month, KEPCo determines its PCA charge based on the actual cost of fuel and purchased power from its owned generation and other suppliers. To mitigate price impacts to 4 Rivers and other members in the short term, KEPCo established a cap on the energy PCA for February bills to its members including 4 Rivers Electric, which otherwise would have been much higher. With the KEPCo cap in place, the PCA applied to 4 Rivers members' bills calculated on March 10 for usage in February was less than 2¢/kWh for all of our members. We expect the impact of the energy emergency to be seen over a period of months.

4 Rivers is committed to mitigating the impact to members and will work with individual members to make sure payment



options are in place and bills are manageable. We are committed to our mission to serve and care for our members, while providing safe, reliable, affordable energy. We will continue to update our members as information becomes available.

Members can always log in to their account at [www.4riverselectric.com](http://www.4riverselectric.com) or on the SmartHub mobile app to check daily, monthly, and yearly usage, call our office at 620-364-2116 or 800-748-7395 to speak with a billing representative or reach us by email at [mybill@4riverselectric.com](mailto:mybill@4riverselectric.com).

## Welcome New Employee Ryan Barnes



**RYAN BARNES** joined the 4 Rivers team in March as a journeyman lineman in the north district. He previously worked for the City of Gardner

electric department. He and his wife, Rebecca, live in Eudora. We welcome Ryan to the cooperative family!



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees. Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

**SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



# Ensuring Reliability When Power Supply Tightens

You expect reliable and affordable electricity from your electric cooperative, so how does your co-op deliver on that promise?

A complex network of electricity generators and tens of thousands of miles of electrical lines work together to ensure that enough electricity is available on the coldest winter morning and during the dog days of summer.

What happens when the demand for power overwhelms the ability to provide it? That's a particularly vexing question given the transition taking place in how electricity is produced and shared across this network.

The key to meeting the energy needs so essential to your quality of life is balancing electricity supply with demand. While that may sound simple, there is a complex web of facilities and organizations that work together to make it happen each day.

Regional transmission organizations coordinate, control and monitor the electric grid across several states in a region. For Kansas, that entity is the Southwest Power Pool. Think of them as energy traffic managers on an interstate highway system, regulating the number of cars — in this case, electricity — and their destination.

Even so, on some days there is an imbalance in that system

that leads to rolling power interruptions or blackouts — so-called “max-gen” events. In those cases, supply simply cannot keep up. In the Midcontinent region comprised of 15 states, there were six max-gen events from 2006-2016. Since 2016, there have been 15, including three last July and August alone.

Simply, that's because power plants that generate electricity are being closed faster than new producers come online. In most cases, traditional large-scale power suppliers such as coal and nuclear plants are being closed and replaced by alternatives on a much smaller scale. And this gap is closing more quickly despite the development of new natural gas-fueled power plants.

As more electric utilities pursue zero- or low-carbon initiatives by 2035 and beyond, this challenge will grow more complex. So, what is the answer?

Electric cooperatives and others in the energy sector will continue to develop renewable options and pursue new technologies. However, absent new large-scale alternatives and advances in energy storage, the stalwarts of today's energy fleet — coal and nuclear energy facilities — must continue to operate in many regions. In some, they remain the most cost-effective options for producing electricity.



LINeworkers  
BRING THE LIGHT.

**Lineworker Appreciation Day**

On April 12, remember to  
#ThankALineworker

# Know What's Below: Steps for Safe Digging

	1	2	3	4	5	
	NOTIFY	WAIT	CONFIRM	RESPECT	DIG CAREFULLY	
						
<b>Starting a new project? Follow 5 steps for safe digging.</b>	Call 811 or make a request online two to three days before you plan to start your project.	Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will mark underground lines.	Confirm all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.	Respect the markers and use them as a guide for the duration of your project.	If you can't avoid digging near the provided markers (within 24 inches on all sides according to Kansas law), consider moving your project.	
<b>NOTE</b> 811 does not mark privately owned utility lines, invisible fences or sprinkler systems. <b>Call a private utility locator for these.</b>						

Spring is just around the corner, and there has never been a better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you are making plans for a new garden or a lawn makeover. However, if you're planning to revamp your backyard oasis, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects — especially those that require digging near underground utility lines.

Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the reminder you want — trust us! 4 Rivers Electric reminds all members who are planning a digging project to call 811 at least three business days before you start. Or you can submit a request online by visiting [www.kansasoncall.com](http://www.kansasoncall.com) (Kansas 811).

### Here's how the process works:

▶ After you call 811 or submit your request online, all affected

utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to get to your request, so please be patient.

- ▶ The affected utilities will send someone out to mark the buried lines with paint or flags.
- ▶ Before you break ground, confirm that all the utilities have responded to your request. If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by your 811 call center representative. If you submitted your request online, refer to your 811 center ticket to confirm everything.

By taking this important step before you break ground on your project, you can help protect not only yourself but also our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 811 first and know what's below.

## Why Do We Trim Trees?

Trees add beauty to our landscape, provide oxygen and can help conserve energy.

When they grow too close to power lines, however, they can cause service disruptions or even outages. That is why branches and limbs that grow into or near lines need to be trimmed and sometimes even removed.

If you notice your trees start to crowd power lines, do not trim them yourself. Contact your electric utility to determine the next recommended step. Only professionals certified for line clearance should prune and trim trees near power lines.

**Trees and other vegetation are the leading cause of service interruptions in many areas.**

