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

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## FROM THE ASSISTANT MANAGER/COO

# Spring Farming Safety: Watch the Wires, Mind the Fire

As spring arrives and farming operations ramp up, safety should be at the forefront of every task. At 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, we are committed to ensuring our members and employees stay safe, especially when working near electrical equipment and power lines. Whether you're preparing fields, moving large equipment, or conducting controlled burns, being aware of electrical hazards can prevent accidents and save lives.

### LOOK UP, LOOK AROUND AND LIVE

One of the most common electrical dangers in agriculture is contact with overhead power lines. Combines, sprayers, augers, and other large equipment used by our farming friends can easily contact power lines, if not paying attention, creating a deadly situation. Before heading into a field, take a moment to identify power lines and plan your route to avoid them. Always maintain at least 10 feet of clearance from overhead lines, and if you must maneuver near them, have a spotter guide you.

When moving large equipment, check clearance heights before crossing under power lines, and ensure no part of your machinery extends into energized

space. If your equipment does contact a power line, stay inside the cab and call 911 immediately. The only exception to staying put is if there is a fire — then, exit by jumping clear with both feet together and shuffle away without lifting your feet. Also, watch for guy wires that are supporting our poles — damaging a guy wire can destabilize the structure and lead to a very dangerous situation.



Mark Doebele

### USE CAUTION AND HAVE A PLAN BEFORE BURNING

Controlled burns help clear pastures for new growth but pose risks near power lines and poles. Fires can cause outages, property damage, and personal injury if not properly managed.

- ▶ Before lighting a fire, check local regulations, obtain permits, and notify neighbors and your local fire department. If burning near power lines, consult 4 Rivers for guidance.
- ▶ Maintain at least 15 feet of clearance from power poles and clear dry grass and debris around them to prevent ignition. Wetting the area near poles before burning can help but never spray water directly on a pole.

*Continued on page 12C ▶*

PHOTO ABOVE SHOWCASES A PASTORAL BARNYARD IN WILSON COUNTY, PHOTOGRAPHED BY CO-OP MEMBER KIRA FRANKENBERG OF RURAL FREDONIA.

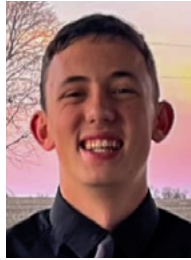
## Youth Leadership Winners Set for Memorable Summer

At 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, we believe in empowering the next generation of community leaders. We are proud to continue this tradition by sending four high school juniors on an all-expenses-paid leadership experience of a lifetime! Two students will attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and two students will attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

During Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, June 14-20, students will travel to Washington, D.C., explore monuments and museums, meet with legislators, cruise the Potomac, and connect with peers from across the country. This immersive trip highlights leadership, history and the cooperative principles that shaped our nation.

From July 11-17, students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming head to Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, for hands-on leadership training. Together, they will create a candy cooperative, hear from inspiring speakers, tour a coal-fired power plant and raft down the Colorado River — all while building lifelong friendships.

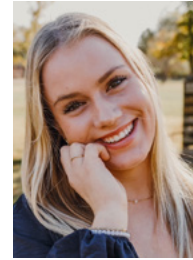
We were inspired by this year's applicants and are so proud to see such engagement and commitment to community by



**Kaleb Arnold**



**Landon Petitjean**



**Jaycee Belcher**



**Cooper Springer**

the young leaders in our cooperative. We congratulate the four students selected to represent 4 Rivers at these events:

### **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR**

- ▶ **KALEB ARNOLD**, Hartford  
*Olpe High School*
- ▶ **LANDON PETITJEAN**, Osage City  
*Osage City High School*

### **COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP**

- ▶ **JAYCEE BELCHER**, Burlington  
*Burlington High School*
- ▶ **COOPER SPRINGER**, Neodesha  
*Neodesha High School*

4 Rivers is proud to have such great student leaders represent us this summer. Fostering youth leadership skills today cultivates strong leaders tomorrow.

## Lineworkers are Wired for Service

Long before the sun rises, lineworkers are gearing up for work in flame-resistant clothing, hard hats and rubber gloves to ensure our members have reliable power. Their job is demanding, requiring technical expertise, physical endurance, and a strong commitment to safety.

On April 14, we recognize Lineworker Appreciation Day, a time to acknowledge the vital role these professionals play in maintaining and restoring electric service. Whether facing extreme weather, troubleshooting outages, or working at dangerous heights, lineworkers are on the front lines, keeping homes, businesses and essential services powered.

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative crews cover our 16-county service area,

building, maintaining and repairing the electric system. Their expertise ensures that daily life runs smoothly, from keeping businesses open to ensuring first responders have the power they need in emergencies.

When severe weather strikes, lineworkers are often the first to respond, working long hours to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. Their dedication extends beyond our own communities — 4 Rivers crews travel to assist fellow cooperatives when major outages require extra hands. This commitment to mutual aid reflects the cooperative principle of working together to serve members.

Behind every lineworker is a team of

dedicated professionals who help make their work possible. Mechanics keep trucks and equipment in top condition, warehouse coordinators ensure crews have the materials they need, and dispatchers carefully manage outage responses. Their efforts, often unseen, are just as essential to keeping the lights on.

This month, we recognize the hard work and dedication of our lineworkers — the ones who brave the elements, work long hours, and keep the power flowing. Their commitment ensures that homes, businesses, and essential services stay powered, no matter the challenge. The next time you flip a switch, take a moment to appreciate the lineworkers who make it possible.

# Congratulations to Recent Retirees Lofdahl and Hanson

Billing Supervisor **TERRI LOFDAHL** retired on Jan. 30 after nearly 27 years of dedicated service to 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative. Her experience and commitment have been invaluable in ensuring accuracy and efficiency in member billing. Terri's dedication and cooperative spirit will be greatly missed by both co-workers and members alike.



Terri Lofdahl



Brian Hanson

**BRIAN HANSON**, engineering technician, retired on Feb. 27 after 12 years with the cooperative. His work in system design and new construction has played a vital role in providing safe, reliable electricity to our members. Brian's knowledge and contributions have made a lasting impact on our operations.

We thank Terri and Brian for their years of service and dedication to 4 Rivers and wish them both a happy and fulfilling retirement!

## Spring Farming Safety *Continued from page 12A* ▶

▶ Burn only in favorable weather conditions, avoiding windy days when embers can spread. Keep fire suppression tools like rakes and extinguishers on hand.

Never leave a fire unattended, and if flames approach power lines, call 911 immediately. After extinguishing the fire, monitor the area for smoldering embers, and report any damage to 4 Rivers.

### HONORING OUR LINE CREWS

April 14 is Lineworker Appreciation Day,

a time to recognize the hardworking men and women who keep our power on. Lineworkers face all kinds of conditions while maintaining our electrical system, ensuring farms, homes and businesses have reliable power. The next time you see a 4 Rivers lineworker, be sure to thank them for their dedication and service.

From all of us at 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, we wish you a safe and productive season. If you have any questions about electrical safety on your farm, don't hesitate to reach out.

**BEFORE THE STORM  
STRIKES  
PROTECT YOUR HOME  
WITH**

**LIGHTNING  
SHIELD**

**CALL TODAY FOR  
HOME SURGE PROTECTION.  
PEACE OF MIND FOR \$12/MONTH.  
620-364-2116**

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 7, 2025**

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. may fund up to two lineworker scholarships annually for tuition, fees, books, tools and supplies not to exceed \$5,000 for each scholarship for up to one year at an electrical lineworker school. Eligible candidates for the scholarship must be high school graduates from any high school or a homeschool program or have attained their GED within the cooperative's service territory. Check out our website for further details on this awesome opportunity!



# The Growing Demand on the Power Grid

## EARTH DAY CALL TO ACTION

With Earth Day around the corner, it's time to reflect on the systems that sustain us. This includes the power grid that keeps our homes comfortable and our modern world running. As climate patterns shift and extreme weather events increase, the grid faces new pressures to meet our growing energy demands. From heatwaves to hurricanes, today's changing conditions test the limits of an infrastructure first built in the late 1800s.

The first power grid, developed in 1882 in New York City, laid the foundation for the modern grid that powers our world. The systems we depend on today were built for past and current weather conditions. However, these conditions are changing. Extreme weather is now the No. 1 cause of blackouts in the U.S., accounting for 80% of major power outages.

## HOW DOES EXTREME WEATHER IMPACT THE GRID?

Regions across the U.S. face extreme weather that strains infrastructure not built for extreme conditions. In Texas, limited winterization led to power outages and frozen pipes during the 2021 winter storm, often referred to as Winter Storm Uri. The Pacific Northwest's record heat dome in 2021 increased electricity demand to record highs, causing grid equipment to overheat. In California, utilities routinely implement public safety shutoffs during dry, windy conditions to prevent wildfires.

Extreme weather impacts the grid in several ways. Sometimes, power is still being produced, but it can't reach homes because power lines are down or damaged by fallen trees and debris during storms. During hurricanes or heavy rainstorms, substations — facilities that control and distribute electricity — can flood, causing widespread outages. Other times, when demand spikes during heatwaves or winter storms, the grid can become overwhelmed, leading to rolling blackouts or outages as supply struggles to meet increased energy demands.

## WHAT IS CAUSING THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY?

While extreme weather is one source of growing energy demand, development and technology are increasing the demand for energy. This demand is projected to rise 15-20% in the U.S. over the next decade, according to the Department of Energy.

Significant factors impacting this growth are the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and its expanding data centers, cloud storage, communication tools and much more.

The grid faces two significant opportunities for growth: adapting to extreme weather conditions and meeting the rising energy demand. The energy industry is working tirelessly to ensure the power grid meets these ever-growing challenges and provides a more resilient and sustainable energy system that supports affordability and reliability.

Utility companies, government agencies, regulators and other stakeholders are working to increase grid resilience.

## While the challenges facing the power grid are significant, there are steps we can all take to reduce strain.

Efforts include raising substations that are vulnerable to flooding, deploying battery storage to supplement the grid, expanding renewable energy sources, and connecting regional grids to improve overall stability.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

While the challenges facing the power grid are significant, there are steps we can all take to reduce strain and contribute to a more reliable energy system.

- ▶ Simple actions like running high-energy appliances during off-peak hours can ease pressure on the grid, especially peak demand times.
- ▶ Conducting a home energy audit can identify ways to improve your home's efficiency, reducing both your energy consumption and utility bills.
- ▶ Make sure you purchase energy efficient appliances. Many utilities, including 4 Rivers Electric, offer incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. Check out our rebate incentives for new electric water heaters and heat pumps at [www.4riverselectric.com](http://www.4riverselectric.com).
- ▶ Investing in battery storage can allow you to store energy when demand is low to use during peak times. Additionally, it can be used during power outages. This can help ensure you have electricity when the grid is most vulnerable.

## LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Join fellow co-op members working together through Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) to influence public policy decisions that impact our co-ops and our way of life. VCP is a grassroots network of co-op members who advocate for policies that support reliable, affordable electricity. Advocacy plays a critical role in shaping energy policy, and cooperative members have a unique opportunity to make their voices heard. By joining, you can help influence decisions that impact the future of our energy system and ensure that cooperative values are represented in energy discussions. For more information and to get involved, visit [www.voicesforcooperativepower.com](http://www.voicesforcooperativepower.com).

## REFLECTING ON EARTH DAY

Earth Day reminds us of the essential systems that sustain us, including the power grid that powers our homes and businesses. By recognizing challenges like extreme weather, increasing energy demand and aging infrastructure, we can take action to make the power grid more sustainable. Every action, from reducing energy consumption to supporting new technologies, contributes to a more resilient future.