

www.4riverselectric.com
620-364-2116

Lebo Headquarters

2731 Milo Terr.

Lebo, KS 66856

Fredonia Office

9346 Jewell Road

Fredonia, KS 66736

Emporia Office

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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PHOTO ABOVE, "BACKROAD BEAUTY," IN COFFEY COUNTY WAS SUBMITTED BY 4 RIVERS MEMBER JULIE ROHRER OF RURAL BURLINGTON.

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Looking Ahead to a New Year of Service

As we begin a new year, I want to remind our members of several important events that help shape the future of 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative. Ballots for the 2025 board of trustees election will be mailed later this month. Your participation is essential to ensuring strong, member-driven leadership for our cooperative. Ballots must be received or postmarked no later than Feb. 20 to be counted. I encourage every member to take a few minutes to review the candidates, consider the responsibility entrusted to our board, and make your voice heard.

Looking ahead, our annual meeting will be March 23 in Emporia. This gathering provides an opportunity to hear updates on the cooperative's financial health, ongoing projects, and future plans. It's also a chance to visit with employees and trustees, ask questions, and engage directly with your co-op. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

With winter now in full swing, it's also a good time to revisit a few important safety reminders. Kansas winters can be unpredictable — sometimes calm, sometimes harsh — and even routine cold snaps can strain electrical equipment and home heating systems. Taking simple precautions can help protect your home and your family.

- ▶ If an outage occurs, stay clear of any downed power lines and treat all lines

as if they are energized.

Report outages immediately in the SmartHub app or call 620-364-2116.

- ▶ If you use a generator, be sure it operates outdoors and away from vents or windows to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- ▶ For those relying on space heaters, keep them at least 3 feet from curtains, bedding or furniture, and plug them directly into a wall outlet — never into an extension cord or power strip.
- ▶ Now is also a good time to test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries if needed. Insulating exposed pipes, sealing drafts, and checking your home's weatherproofing can reduce energy use and prevent cold-weather damage.
- ▶ When driving after storms, please watch for crews working along roadways and give them room to work safely.

Winter brings its challenges, but it also highlights the strength and resilience of the rural communities we serve. Thank you for your continued support of 4 Rivers, and for doing your part to stay safe and prepared. I look forward to a productive and positive year together.



Dennis Svanes

Watch your mailbox! District election ballots should arrive in late January. Please return your completed ballot to the Lebo office or ensure it is postmarked by Feb. 20 for your vote to be counted!

Leave Your Mark

4 RIVERS INVITES HIGH
FOR 2026 YOUTH LEAD

Every generation leaves behind a legacy — footprints that shape the future. The next chapter belongs to today's young leaders, and 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is proud to help them take their first steps. This summer, we will sponsor four high school juniors on two unforgettable leadership experiences: the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in the Colorado Rockies.

For more than 60 years, electric cooperatives across the country have invested in students through these programs, sending them to discover their voice, walk through history, build lifelong friendships and grow into leaders who strengthen their hometowns. These opportunities aren't just trips — they're chapters in a student's story, full of moments that shape who they become.

Another said they were inspired by national speakers and deeply moved by visits to historic sites — the kind of memories that stay with you forever.

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP —

JULY 10-16, 2026

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO

Two additional students will represent 4 Rivers Electric at the 2026 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, joining peers from Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Oklahoma for a week in the mountains.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR — JUNE 13-19, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Each June, more than 1,800 students from 44 states gather in our nation's capital for one of the most recognized youth leadership programs in the country. Students representing Kansas — including two selected from 4 Rivers — will join them for a week of exploration, connection and personal growth.

DURING YOUTH TOUR, STUDENTS WILL:

- ▶ Develop leadership skills through workshops and hands-on experiences.
- ▶ Meet with elected officials and see how government impacts their communities.
- ▶ Explore iconic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery and world-class museums.
- ▶ Strengthen their résumés with a nationally recognized program that stands out to colleges and employers.
- ▶ Connect with peers from across the country, forming friendships that last long after the trip ends.

Last year's 4 Rivers delegates called the experience "a trip of a lifetime." One student shared, "I'll always remember seeing the sights of D.C., exploring landmarks and making many new friends."

TOP 5 REASONS TO APPLY FOR THE 2026 YOUTH PROGRAMS

1 IT'S A TRUE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY. Students describe both trips as unforgettable experiences that broadened their world and helped shape their confidence and goals.

2 YOU MAKE LIFELONG FRIENDS FAST. Whether traveling in D.C. or rafting in Colorado, students bond quickly with peers from across Kansas and beyond, forming friendships that last well beyond the trip.

3 YOU GROW AS A LEADER. Delegates gain leadership skills through workshops, team activities and hands-on experiences, all while having fun. Many said they returned home more confident than ever.

4 YOU EXPLORE INCREDIBLE PLACES. Stand on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Ride a gondola up Mount Werner. Visit world-class museums. Hike, raft, learn, explore — these trips immerse students in history, nature and adventure.

5 IT COSTS FAMILIES NOTHING. 4 Rivers covers all expenses — travel, lodging, meals and activities, because investing in young people is at the heart of the cooperative mission.

AT CAMP, STUDENTS WILL:

- ▶ Build and operate a student-led candy cooperative.
- ▶ Participate in leadership sessions that grow confidence, communication and teamwork.
- ▶ Enjoy activities like rafting, volleyball, swimming, a talent show and a gondola ride up Mount Werner.
- ▶ Experience demonstrations from electric cooperative linemen, raptor specialists and more.
- ▶ Learn about career opportunities in the cooperative network.

2025 campers described the experience as empowering and inclusive. One student said, "The counselors and ambassadors made me feel included, and I made great friendships during activities and even on the bus rides." Another shared, "The leadership presentations gave me confidence in my ability to lead authentically in my own skin."

WHAT'S IN IT FOR STUDENTS — AND FAMILIES?

Both trips offer something students rarely find anywhere else: the chance to see the world beyond home while gaining real leadership skills, broadening

SCHOOL JUNIORS TO APPLY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The leadership presentations gave me confidence in my ability to lead authentically in my own skin.

JAYCEE BELCHER, 2025 CAMPER

their perspectives and building confidence.

And the best part? 4 Rivers covers all expenses — travel, lodging, meals and program costs. We believe in investing in our communities by investing in the young people who will one day lead them.

These programs are coordinated in partnership with Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

APPLY TODAY — DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY

Applications for the youth program opportunities are **DUE FEB. 16.**

Any high school junior who lives in 4 Rivers Electric territory and has a parent or guardian who is a current member of 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is eligible.

Students selected will join more than 1,800 of the nation's brightest young leaders in writing the next chapter of their story — and their community's.

This is more than a trip.

IT'S A CHANCE TO LEAVE YOUR MARK.

Learn more or apply at www.4riverselectric.com. Questions? Contact Member Services Manager April Engstrom at 620-364-2116 ext. 306.

Need Help With Winter Heating Bills?

LIEAP Applications Open Jan. 20-March 31

Winter energy costs can put extra strain on many Kansas households, but help is available. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides a one-time annual benefit to help eligible households with home heating expenses.

WHAT IS LIEAP?

LIEAP is a federally funded program that assists qualifying households with a portion of their home heating costs. Benefits vary based on income, number of people in the home, type of dwelling, and the primary heating source.

This is not a loan — it's assistance designed to help families manage the cost of winter energy use.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A household may qualify if:

- ▶ An adult living at the residence is personally responsible for paying the heating bill (whether to a utility, fuel provider or landlord).
- ▶ The gross household income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. See chart at right for 2026 income eligibility guidelines.

HOW TO APPLY

LIEAP applications will be accepted from Jan. 20 until 5 p.m., March 31, 2026.

You can apply:

- ▶ Through the Kansas DCF Self-Service Portal at www.dcf.ks.gov.
- ▶ By paper application, available through local Kansas DCF offices.
- ▶ By requesting a mailed copy if internet access is limited.

BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE:

- ▶ Proof of income for all adults in the household.
- ▶ Copies of recent heating bills or fuel receipts.
- ▶ A rental agreement if heat is included in rent.
- ▶ Signatures from all adult household members.

NOTE: You must reapply each year unless you qualify for DCF's three-year eligibility option.

WHY LIEAP MATTERS

For many families, LIEAP helps ease the burden of high winter energy costs. Even a modest benefit can:

- ▶ Prevent heat insecurity.
- ▶ Reduce financial stress.
- ▶ Help families stay safe during extreme cold.

It's one of the most important winter support resources available to Kansas households.

NEED ASSISTANCE?

For information on your usage or help accessing information needed for your application, contact our office. While 4 Rivers does not administer LIEAP; we are happy to help point you in the right direction.

Staying warm shouldn't be a struggle. If you think you may qualify, apply early and stay safe this winter.

2026 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,956
2	\$2,644
3	\$3,331
4	\$4,019
5	\$4,706
6	\$5,394
7	\$6,081
8	\$6,769
+ \$688 for each additional person	

LIEAP QUICK FACTS

▶ APPLICATION WINDOW:

Jan. 20-Mar. 31, 2026

▶ BENEFIT TYPE:

One-time annual heating assistance

▶ WHO CAN APPLY:

Any household meeting income & responsibility requirements

▶ WHERE TO APPLY:

www.dcf.ks.gov

▶ HELP BY PHONE:

888-369-4777

▶ DON'T WAIT, APPLY EARLY:

Processing times can increase as the deadline approaches.



CO-OP CLASSROOM

Understanding the Power Behind Your Power

Winter Lessons From Our Lineworkers

When you flip a switch on a cold January morning, it's easy to forget what's happening behind the scenes to keep that light on. Substations, transformers and miles of power lines all work together to deliver reliable electricity to your home. But in winter, when freezing temperatures, ice and wind push our system to its limits, the real power behind your power comes down to people.

Our 4 Rivers lineworkers are trained to work safely and efficiently in all conditions — often in the coldest, darkest hours — to inspect equipment, repair outages and restore service. Their work is demanding, precise and sometimes dangerous, especially when the weather turns harsh. Yet they show up every time, because keeping your family safe and warm is what cooperative service is all about.

This winter, we invite you to take a lesson from the people who brave the elements to keep our communities running. Whether you're working outside, enjoying winter recreation or simply trying to stay safe as temperatures drop, the same principles that guide our crews can help protect you too.

WHAT WE LEARN FROM LINeworkers: STAYING SAFE IN THE COLD

1 WATCH THE WEATHER. Before every job, our crews monitor wind chill, snow, ice accumulation and storm fronts. You should too. Cold stress can creep in quickly, even during short

periods outdoors. Take frequent breaks inside to warm up, and plan your time outside around changing conditions.

2 DRESS THE PART. Lineworkers rely on layered clothing to stay warm, dry and safe. You can do the same. Wear moisture-wicking base layers. Add insulating mid-layers. Top with a wind- and water-resistant outer shell. Keep socks dry and choose waterproof boots. If clothing becomes wet, replace it immediately. Even light moisture increases the risk of frostbite.

3 PROTECT YOUR HEAD, FACE AND HANDS. Extremities are the first to lose heat and the first to suffer frostbite. Our crews use specialized hardhat liners, balaclavas and insulated gloves designed for electrical safety. While most people don't need voltage-rated protective equipment, you should still wear a warm hat or hood, protect your face in high winds, and use insulated gloves or mittens outdoors.

4 FUEL UP AND STAY HYDRATED. Cold weather takes more energy than you think. Lineworkers stay fueled with warm fluids and high-energy foods throughout long shifts. We should do the same when spending extended time in the cold.

5 KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS. Even trained professionals stay vigilant for symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia — and you should, too. If you notice these symptoms, move to warmth immediately. Severe cases require medical attention.

► SIGNS OF FROSTBITE

- Numbness or tingling
- Skin turning red, white or bluish-gray
- Hard, waxy or cold skin
- Stiff joints

► SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA

- Shivering
- Confusion or slurred speech
- Drowsiness
- Slow, shallow breathing

6 BE PREPARED ON THE ROAD. Crews equip their trucks for winter emergencies. You should equip your vehicle as well. Having the right tools on hand can make all the difference in an unexpected situation. Include:

- Blankets
- Phone chargers
- Traction aids
- Snacks and bottled water
- Flashlights

WHY THIS MATTERS: THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE GRID

When frigid temperatures hit, lineworkers suit up, gear up and head out so that others can have heat, light and safety. Their work reminds us that winter demands preparation, awareness and respect for the elements. By following the same cold-weather safety steps our lineworkers practice every day, you can help protect yourself, your family and your neighbors this winter.

The power behind your power isn't just about substations and circuits — it's about people, community and the cooperative spirit that keeps us all connected.