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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 GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Protecting Our Power — and Our Pocketbooks

When I look at the photos of our equipment at Coffeyville distribution point — riddled with bullet holes — there's no other way to describe it: this was an act of domestic terrorism. The damage was senseless, and the frustration we feel at 4 Rivers is immense. This isn't just vandalism. This act caused tens of thousands of dollars in damage, disrupted communication service, and introduced potential power quality issues like surges and sags. Most concerning of all, it created a life-threatening hazard for our linemen and the community.

We've reported the incident to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI), and we hope those responsible are identified and held accountable. If you have any information, please contact the Sheriff's Department, KBI or our office directly.

LET ME BE VERY CLEAR. When power equipment is struck by bullets, hit by trees, entangled in farm machinery or touched by an animal or person, it becomes unpredictable and dangerous. If you ever see damaged equipment, stay away and call us immediately.

Now, switching gears — I want to follow up on last month's article about home solar systems. In it, I shared why many systems don't save money once the time value of money is factored in. That article stirred up some backlash

online from solar sales groups. However, I stand by what I said.

Often, salespeople overpromise savings, ignore maintenance costs, and gloss over the long-term financial picture. The truth is, unless you're able to purchase solar components at wholesale prices and handle the installation yourself — as a qualified electrician who also does roofing — the economics rarely pencil out.

We often hear from members dealing with failed systems, only to discover the installer is no longer in business or that repair costs are sky-high. That's why I'm bringing this up again as a warning: **CAVEAT EMPTOR — LET THE BUYER BEWARE.**

To lower your electric bill, start with energy efficiency. It works. Add insulation. Replace old doors and windows and seal around them. Upgrade inefficient appliances. Consider replacing your A/C unit and be sure to keep it serviced for maximum efficiency as seasons change. These steps will reduce your energy consumption — and if you still decide to install solar down the road, you'll likely need fewer panels for the job.

While this message is sobering, it's in the spirit of serving and caring for our members. Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and enjoyable summer.



Dennis Svanes

CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATED

YOUR SHARE OF 2024 MARGINS

As a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative, 4 Rivers allocates margins — any funds remaining after expenses — back to members each year. These margins are assigned based on how much electricity each member used during that year.

This month, your July bill will include a message about your 2024 capital credit allocation. This isn't a refund or immediate payout, but rather a record of your share of the cooperative's margins for 2024.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ALLOCATED CAPITAL CREDITS?

Allocated capital credits remain with the cooperative for a period of time and are used to help fund long-term investments in the electric system — such as new construction, maintenance and system improvements. This reduces the need to borrow money and helps keep rates stable for all members.

When financial conditions allow, and with board approval, 4 Rivers retires capital credits — returning a portion of previously allocated margins to members. Retirements usually happen at the end of the year, using a first-in, first-out method, meaning older credits are returned first.

When capital credits are retired, active members receive a credit on their electric bill, and former members receive a check by mail. That's why it's important to keep your mailing address current, even if you move or are no longer a member.

Have questions about your allocation or how capital credits work? We're here to help — just give us a call!

Heads Up for Harvest: Stay Safe Around Overhead Power Lines

During harvest season, 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative reminds our members and neighbors to stay alert and practice safety around overhead power lines. Large equipment like combines, grain augers and irrigation pipes can easily come in contact with electric lines — posing a serious risk of electrocution, equipment damage or power outages.

LOOK UP AND LIVE

Overhead lines may appear to be out of the way, but tall or extended equipment can come dangerously close — especially when moving between fields or around farmyards. Always check for lines before raising augers, extending sprayers, or backing up tall equipment.

HARVEST SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Survey the area before beginning work. Identify overhead lines and plan your route to avoid them.
- ▶ Keep at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and any equipment, including antennas and extensions.
- ▶ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- ▶ Lower equipment to the lowest possible position before moving it, especially when transporting down the road or through gates.



Before extending augers, truck beds or other extendable equipment, move away from power lines. Always rely on a spotter to ensure your extension won't enter power lines and maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance between power lines and the tallest point of equipment.

- ▶ Avoid storing grain bins or materials under or near power lines. Electricity can arc even without direct contact.

IF CONTACT OCCURS

If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside the cab and call 911 immediately. Only exit if there is a fire — then jump clear with both feet together and shuffle away without touching the equipment and ground at the same time.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If you're planning any field changes, building new bins, or installing irrigation equipment near power lines, contact 4 Rivers first. We can assist with line location or rerouting options.

Your safety is our top priority. Let's work together for a safe and successful harvest.



4 Rivers Hosts Students for Hands-On Lineworker Experience

Construction Academy connects youth with career paths in the trades

Last month, 4 Rivers Electric partnered with Fredonia High School and local businesses to participate in the school's first-ever **CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY** — a hands-on summer program designed to introduce high school students to careers in the skilled trades. As part of the academy, three students spent a day with the 4 Rivers team to learn what it takes to be an electric lineworker.

The day was filled with insight, interaction and plenty of real-world exposure. Students began at the 4 Rivers headquarters with a welcome and safety orientation, followed by a short presentation on what makes electric cooperatives unique and how lineworkers help keep power flowing to homes and businesses across rural Kansas.

From there, students toured our truck bays, tool rooms and equipment yard before rotating through interactive stations where they tried their hands at key linework skills — assembling a cross-arm, rigging a handline, and suiting up in personal protective gear, which can weigh between 40 and 60 pounds.

Next, the group joined our construction crew at a nearby jobsite, where they observed the team replacing a power pole that had broken during a storm the night before. Students were able to ask questions on site and then returned to the shop for lunch and conversation with the crew, learning directly from apprentices and journeymen about their training, career paths, and the challenges and rewards of the job.

After lunch, students watched a climbing demonstration by 4 Rivers summer intern Braden Jones, then had the opportunity to try on climbing hooks, belts and safety harnesses for a hands-on look at the technical side of linework. The day continued with a bucket truck demonstration, where students geared up to experience the operation of a 60-foot aerial lift under the guidance of experienced journeymen.

The afternoon wrapped up with a discussion on career opportunities in the electric utility field, including apprenticeship programs, pay progression and the unique benefits of working for a cooperative.

"We want to be part of the solution when it comes to workforce development," said Larry McVey, line operations supervisor for 4 Rivers. "Hosting students for a day gives them a real-world look at the job — and maybe even a future they hadn't considered before."

By opening our doors to the next generation, 4 Rivers is proud to support career exploration and carry forward the tradition of safety, service and skill in the linework profession.

FAR RIGHT: Intern Braden Jones demonstrates pole climbing for attendees.

TOP: Line Operations Supervisor Larry McVey discusses cooperative equipment.

MIDDLE: Students observe broken pole change out.

BOTTOM: Construction Foreman Jeff Reed explains fuses and reclosers.



CO-OP CLASSROOM

Understanding the Power Behind Your Power

Who Owns What?

Understanding electric equipment responsibilities

As July brings warmer weather and a risk of summer storms, it's a good time to review who's responsible for what when it comes to electric service equipment. When severe weather strikes, understanding the difference between equipment maintained by 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative and what falls to the homeowner can help prevent delays and keep everyone safe.

WHAT 4 RIVERS MAINTAINS

4 Rivers is responsible for the electric infrastructure that delivers power to your home or business. This includes:

- ▶ Utility poles
- ▶ Distribution power lines
- ▶ Electric meters
- ▶ Pad-mounted transformers

WHAT THE MEMBER MAINTAINS

Members are responsible for the electric equipment beyond the meter. This includes:

- ▶ Main breaker and any additional breakers below the meter
- ▶ Overhead or underground lines between the meter pole and the home.
- ▶ The weatherhead and service mast between the meter and home.
- ▶ Any underground service lines that run from the meter to your structure.
- ▶ The main service panel inside the home or building.

If this member-owned equipment is damaged, an electrician must complete repairs before 4 Rivers can safely restore your electric service. Working with a

licensed professional ensures repairs are handled safely and correctly.

Tree Trimming Responsibilities

We all appreciate trees and landscaping that make our communities beautiful, but overgrown branches can cause problems during storms. 4 Rivers regularly trims trees near our distribution lines to maintain safe and reliable service. If you see a limb encroaching into a main power line, give us a call.

However, members are responsible for clearing vegetation around the service line that runs from the meter pole to the home. In these cases, we recommend hiring a qualified tree-trimming service.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR RELIABLE POWER

By understanding your equipment responsibilities and being prepared ahead of storms, you help ensure a faster, safer restoration process. At 4 Rivers, we're committed to working together with our members to keep the power flowing — rain or shine.

If you have any questions about your electrical equipment, we're here to help. Please contact 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. at 620-364-2116.

