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4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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FROM THE MANAGER

Celebrating Reliability and Community During National Cooperative Month

As we celebrate National Cooperative Month this October, it's a perfect time to reflect on the core values of 4 Rivers and our commitment to serving you, our members. One of the most critical aspects of this service is ensuring reliable power, even in the face of challenges.

Outages are no fun for anyone. At 4 Rivers, we take proactive steps to minimize outages as much as possible. Our right-of-way maintenance program involves trimming, cutting and spraying trees to prevent them from contacting power lines, which reduces the risk of outages and line loss.

We also perform pole testing to ensure the strength and durability

of the 85,000 poles we maintain. Poles that have weakened over time are identified and replaced by our dedicated line crews, ensuring that we stay ahead of potential issues, especially during extreme weather.

Each year, we aim to inspect 100% of our 4,018 miles of overhead and underground lines and facilities, which is another key piece of the reliability puzzle.

And, of course, our highly trained crews are always on the lookout for maintenance needs that can be addressed before they result in an



Dennis Svanes

Continued on page 12D ▶

Join us for a Co-op Month Tailgate!

We are grilling up hot dogs before the game — stop by and say hello!

- ▶ **FRIDAY, OCT. 4 AT 6 P.M.**
Neodesha Bluestreaks vs. Fredonia Yellowjackets at Fredonia's Gene John Stadium, 916 Robinson, Fredonia
- ▶ **FRIDAY, OCT. 18 AT 6 P.M.**
Southern Coffee County Titans vs. Marais Des Cynes Valley Trojans at MDCV Stadium, 508 N. Main St., Melvern



THE HEADER PHOTO ABOVE, HIGHLIGHTING THE BEAUTY OF OUR COOPERATIVE TERRITORY, WAS TAKEN BY MEMBER KIMBERLY STITHAM OF RURAL FREDONIA.

Making Co-op History

4 Rivers Electric and the evolution of rural electrification

October is Cooperative Month and a great time to reflect on the past and present.

In the early 20th century, rural eastern Kansas was a place of boundless natural beauty, but also a land where the simple luxuries of modern life were scarce. Progress was slow and the rhythm of life was dictated by the rise and fall of the sun.

A spark of innovation ignited change. The formation of electric cooperatives in Kansas marked a pivotal moment in our history. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Act, a New Deal initiative under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, provided a lifeline to rural communities. For Kansas, it meant a chance to escape the shadow of isolation and embrace the glow of the modern world.

Radiant Electric Cooperative, Inc., founded in 1941, and Lyon-Coffey Electric Cooperative, Inc., formed in 1989 from the merger of two smaller cooperatives, had long histories of serving rural communities with dedication. By early 2018, the leadership of both cooperatives recognized an opportunity to enhance service by combining their strengths. With similar operational models and a shared commitment to affordable, high-quality service, consolidation was a compelling idea. Members from both cooperatives

voted to establish 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. as of Jan. 1, 2020.

4 Rivers Electric began leveraging combined resources of Lyon-Coffey and Radiant Electric to provide safe, reliable affordable electricity to our members while maintaining a rich tradition of member-focused service. The consolidation is a significant milestone in the evolution of rural electric service in Kansas.

“Our cooperative principles have remained the same and are considered with the importance and priority as when we first organized,” said Mark Doebele, 4 Rivers assistant general manager. “The world and technology have improved, and cooperatives have continued to adapt to our members’ needs.”

“In the first 20 years, the focus was on infrastructure,” Doebele said. “We needed to build many miles of transmission and distribution lines to bring electricity to homes and farms inside our newly defined service territories. This huge economic burden was supported by the federal government’s REA loan program.

Though we continue to expand, today’s main operational costs are replacement and repair of an aging infrastructure.”

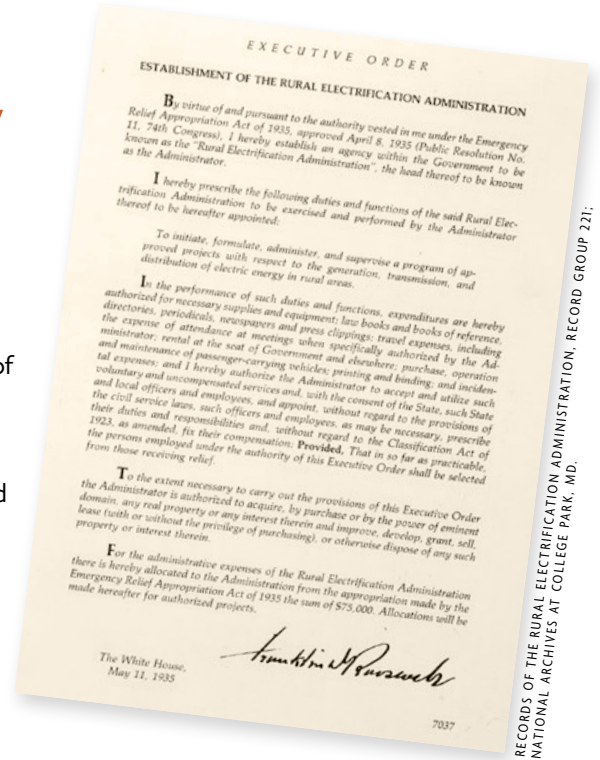
Electric cooperatives transformed Kansas in ways that

continue to resonate today. Cooperatives have done more than just bring light; they bridged a gap between isolation and connectivity, distance and community. The cooperative model, grounded in principles of democracy and mutual benefit, ensures that generations of Kansans have access to safe, reliable, affordable electricity.

“Cooperatives were born from politics, and we will continue to fight on capitol hill to keep our autonomy and independence. That has never changed,” Doebele said.

The faded photographs and yellowed articles from the past evoke a sense of nostalgia, capturing the essence of a time when innovation and communal effort transformed rural Kansas. These relics tell the story of pioneers whose determination laid the foundation for all electric cooperatives, like 4 Rivers. Their legacy, infused with pride and perseverance, serves as a powerful reminder of how far we’ve come.

As we reflect on National Cooperative Month, we honor the resilient spirit that drives 4 Rivers Electric — a testament to the enduring strength of community, shared vision and the Seven Cooperative Principles we hold dear today.



RECORDS OF THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION, RECORD GROUP 221: NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MD.



National First Responders Day



National First Responders Day, observed annually on Oct. 28, is an excellent time to recognize and honor the vital role of first responders. They make it their business to take action when disaster strikes.

First responders play a crucial role in protecting public safety and responding to emergencies. These dedicated professionals include firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. They face numerous challenges and make significant sacrifices to safeguard our communities.

It's important to note that utility workers, including those in the electricity sector, are also considered first responders. In 2003, President George W. Bush officially recognized public works professionals as first responders, highlighting the critical role utility workers play in emergency response and recovery efforts.

UTILITIES AND FIRST RESPONDERS: AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP

Utility companies and traditional first responders often work hand in hand during emergencies. When natural disasters strike or accidents occur, utility workers are frequently among the first on the scene, working alongside firefighters, police and medical personnel to ensure public safety and restore essential services.

When natural disasters strike or accidents occur, utility workers are frequently among the first on the scene, working alongside firefighters, police and medical personnel to ensure public safety and restore essential services.

When traffic accidents, high winds, ice storms and other events involve downed power lines or power outages, they can cause both visible and hidden hazards that can put everyone at risk. It's important for utility workers and other first responders to work together to minimize risk.

First responders have a critical role in keeping communities safe. National First Responders Day serves as a reminder of the importance of collaboration, preparedness and mutual support in times of crisis.

To all who selflessly serve as first responders to keep us safe — we share gratitude on National First Responders Day and every day of the year.



Annual Co-op Month Photo Contest

To celebrate Co-op Month, we are having a photo contest to highlight 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative's beautiful service territory. Enter the contest at www.4riverselectric.com or send your entry to april.engstrom@4riverselectric.com **BY OCT. 31, 2024.**

- ▶ Must be copyright owned by the individual person entering the image.
- ▶ Photos may include 4 Rivers employees at work, but no individual residents.
- ▶ By participating, you agree to give 4 Rivers permission to use your photos.
- ▶ Must be a consumer-member of 4 Rivers Electric.
- ▶ Include name, address, contact info and photo title with your submission.
- ▶ Photos must be taken in 4 Rivers service territory.
- ▶ Limit two photo submissions per member.
- ▶ AI generated photos will not be accepted for this contest.

FIRST PLACE

\$100 bill credit

SECOND PLACE

\$75 bill credit

THIRD PLACE

\$50 bill credit

Community During National Cooperative Month

Continued from page 12A ▶

outage. We also encourage you, our members, to alert us to any concerns you see in the field. Your involvement strengthens our cooperative spirit and allows us to proactively resolve potential issues.

Despite all these efforts, outages do occur. In 2023, our members experienced an average of 244 minutes of outage time. This was largely due to unavoidable factors:

- ▶ **54 MINUTES** — transmission provider issues.
- ▶ **2 MINUTES** — planned outages.
- ▶ **188 MINUTES** — weather-related, caused by thunderstorms, high winds and ice storms.

The unpredictability of Kansas weather is a constant challenge, contributing to most of our outage minutes. Other causes include vehicle and farm equipment accidents, as well as interference from wildlife.

Years of exposure to harsh weather conditions like sun, wind and cold gradually weaken our infrastructure, which is why we place such high importance on our maintenance

programs. These efforts represent our dedication to maintaining a reliable, resilient system for all our members.

4 Rivers is committed to delivering reliable service despite the many challenges we face, especially from ol' mother nature and Kansas' unpredictable climate. During National Cooperative Month, it's important to remember that reliability isn't just about keeping the lights on — it's about living our cooperative principles of dedication, community and member focus.

With that in mind, please join us at one of our fall community tailgate events. We'll be serving hot dogs, chips and water before the football games until kickoff. We enjoy visiting with our members during these Co-op Month activities and hope to see you there.

If you have any questions or concerns about your service, power quality, or anything else, please reach out. We're here to serve you and improve our cooperative community, together.

2024 ELECTION KEY DATES

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

- ▶ **IN-PERSON AT LOCAL ELECTION OFFICE:** Oct. 15
- ▶ **ONLINE:** Oct. 15
- ▶ **BY MAIL (POSTMARKED BY):** Oct. 15

ADVANCE MAIL BALLOT DEADLINES

- ▶ **REQUEST BALLOT (RECEIVED BY):** Oct. 29
- ▶ **RETURN BALLOT BY MAIL (POSTMARKED BY):** Nov. 5 close of polls
- ▶ **RETURN BALLOT IN PERSON:** Nov. 5 close of polls

VOTING DEADLINES

- ▶ **ADVANCE IN-PERSON VOTING:** varies by location
- ▶ **IN-PERSON:** Nov. 5

ARE YOU A CO-OP VOTER?

4 Rivers Electric Co-op has again joined America's electric cooperatives to help get out the vote into our community by being a part of the Co-ops Vote program. This collaborative effort provides us the opportunity to educate lawmakers, build awareness about our issues and concerns, and advocate for policies that are important to our co-op and our community.

Federal, state and local elections offer opportunities to vote for leaders who support energy policies that promote safe, reliable and affordable energy. In particular, they allow us to elect public officials who understand and appreciate America's electric cooperatives and will serve as our champion during policy discussions.

Now is the perfect time to confirm that you are registered to vote and encourage new voters to get registered. For voter resources and to

learn the five simple steps to being a co-op voter, visit the Co-ops Vote website at www.vote.coop.

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan program developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. Co-op voters across 48 states work together to ensure that electric co-ops have a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact.

Co-ops are a trusted voice in Washington, D.C. The more our community members turn out to vote, the greater the opportunity we have to elect leaders who understand co-ops and the issues we face.

The co-op voice is powerful, and it starts with you!

