

www.4riverselectric.com
620-364-2116 or 800-748-7395

Northern District
2731 Milo Terr.
Lebo, KS 66856

Southern District
9346 Jewell Road
Fredonia, KS 66736

Payment Center
2501 W. 18th Ave., Ste. B
Emporia, KS 66801

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FROM THE MANAGER

4 Rivers Partners With EMP Shield for Enhanced Surge Protection Devices

Here at 4 Rivers Electric, the quality of electricity we provide our members is a top priority. However, factors beyond our control, such as storms, can cause power surges. We are thrilled to announce our partnership with EMP Shield in Burlington to offer Lightning Shield, a superior surge protection device.

While historically, we have offered and still maintain other protection devices, Lightning Shield presents a significant improvement. We will soon be offering these meter socket surge devices for a low monthly fee (pricing details are forthcoming). These devices are designed to work with the majority of our services. Our goal is to provide these at a cost-based rate, without added margins.

EMP Shield backs their Lightning Shield devices with up to \$25,000 in warranty coverage for members using the product. This coverage does not require accessing homeowners' insurance for damages caused by a surge that the device should protect against.

Members currently using our older units and paying a monthly fee will be transitioned to the new Lightning Shield units.

Interested in installing a new Lightning Shield device? Contact our

office to be added to the installation list.

Additionally, EMP Shield offers various other surge protection devices for services that cannot use the meter base device, such as three-phase services, or for those who prefer to own their own device. The warranty coverage also applies to these units if installed by a certified electrician according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Surges can occur from any cable or wire entering a home or building. EMP Shield provides units to suppress surges from telephone lines, coaxial cables, network cables, and even garage door opener antennas. They also offer protection devices for vehicles and RVs, as well as individual pieces of equipment like industrial motors.

EMP Shield products are manufactured locally in Kansas, creating jobs within our community and leveraging state-of-the-art, leading-edge technology. Our excitement about this partnership is truly an understatement.

Look for more information about this new product here in our centerspread, as well as our website, social media, mailings and offices.



Dennis Svanes

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



4 Rivers Student Leaders Empowered at Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

ELI ERVIN, Burlington High School, and **MARISA GHGRAMM**, West Elk High School, both currently seniors, represented 4 Rivers Electric at the 47th Annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) July 12-18. **APRIL ENGSTROM**, 4 Rivers manager of member services, also attended the camp as a chaperone. Near scenic Steamboat Springs, Colorado, this event brought together 79 student leaders from Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Wyoming, sponsored by 44 participating electric and agriculture cooperatives.

Ervin and Ghramm were selected after applying to 4REC's annual youth program contest. 4 Rivers considers students' leadership skills, academic ability, and extracurricular involvement. Interviews are conducted with application finalists, and four students are chosen to represent our cooperative at either CYLC or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in

Washington, D.C.

During CYLC, Ervin and Ghramm learned about cooperative organizational structure and operation by forming a student-led candy cooperative. They collaborated to elect a board of directors composed of their peers, appoint a general manager, form committees,

and engage in daily membership meetings. In addition to these experiences, participants attended seminars covering leadership, conflict management, and co-op career pathways. The agenda also featured sessions on electric safety and avian protection by HawkQuest, along with a tour of the Craig Power Station.

At the conclusion of the camp, students reflected on their time in Colorado. "I've been able to grow as a person," Ghramm said. "The programs and other campers inspire me to always leave a positive impact."

"Camp affected me in a positive way," Ervin said. "I was nervous at first, but quickly felt welcomed and inspired by the campers and speakers."

Along with the professional development programs, CYLC included a visit to Mount Werner and downtown Steamboat Springs, rafting on the Colorado River, and other camp activities organized by the student committees, such as a volleyball tournament, talent show and a dance.

Engstrom says she is impressed with how impactful CYLC is for these young leaders who are the future of our cooperatives and communities, and how quickly they bonded and stepped into their roles as young adult leaders throughout the week.

"The leadership workshops are engaging; the camp experiences unforgettable," Engstrom said. "During the tour of Craig Power Station, campers discussed the significance of a balanced mix of generating sources to ensure reliability — an important message they can help share with others."

4 Rivers sponsors four students annually to attend either CYLC or Youth Tour. High school juniors whose parents/guardians are members of 4 Rivers Electric are eligible to apply. For more information, contact April Engstrom, manager of member services, or visit www.4riverselectric.com/youth-leadership-programs.



Marisa Ghramm (left), West Elk High School, and Eli Ervin, Burlington High School, pose in front of Elk River during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp July 12-18.

EPA's Power Plant Rule Threatens Electric Reliability

As a member-owned electric cooperative, providing safe, reliable power at an affordable cost is the focal point of everything we do here at 4 Rivers Electric. In the co-op family, we have a responsibility to talk about our challenges, in addition to sharing our successes.

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule that impacts energy production from power plants. The power plant rule will undoubtedly threaten access to reliable electricity for our local communities and similar communities nationwide.

The EPA rule requires the country's existing coal and new natural gas plants to install carbon capture and storage (CCS) — a technology that has potential but has not been proven to be viable as required. No power plant in North America currently uses CCS at the scale and levels mandated by EPA. When power plants are unable to comply with EPA's CCS requirements, they will be required to shut down, significantly limit operations, or switch fuels. These unrealistic standards will force the unnecessary and early shutdown of many power plants that currently provide reliable electricity 24/7 — rain, shine, snow or ice.

4 Rivers Electric uses a balanced mix of generating resources and technology to make sure we deliver electricity at the lowest possible cost to our members. Last year, 69% of our diverse fuel sources were non-greenhouse gas emitting. In addition, we continue to encourage energy efficiency and include appliance rebate programs for our members purchasing new electric water heaters and heat pumps, knowing the cleanest kilowatt is the one never generated.

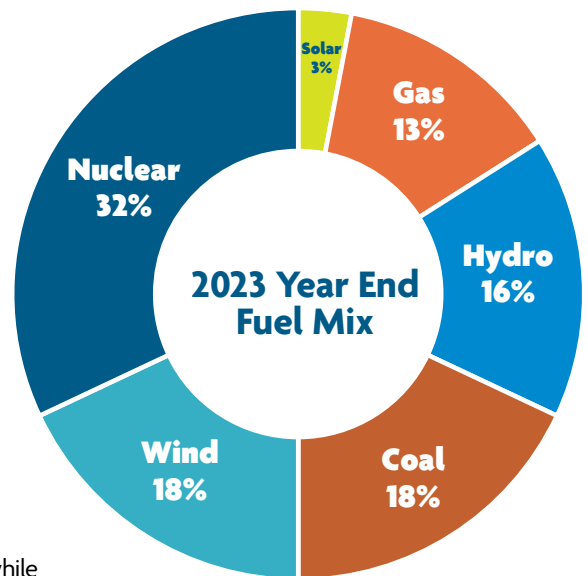
Renewable sources, such as solar and wind, are important components of our overall generation mix. However, the intermittent nature of these energy

sources limits dependability. Wind does not consistently blow, and the sun doesn't always shine, however, the need for always-available power generating resources is still essential. The timing of the power plant rule is equally troubling. At the same time, the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants while utilities are facing a surge in electricity demand. Demand driven by the onshoring of manufacturing, the growth of the American economy and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce and cryptocurrency.

The Energy Information Administration projects that power demand will increase by 2.5% this year and 3.2% in 2025. Over the next five years, peak electricity demand is forecasted to grow by 38 gigawatts — the equivalent of adding another California to the nation's grid. Supply is not keeping up. More than 110 gigawatts of always-available generation is forecasted to retire by 2033; that's enough to power about 35 million homes.

Many states have already experienced rolling outages due to a lack of generation, and if the supply of electricity is further threatened by the EPA's power plant rule, the problem will only get worse. In fact, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's electric reliability watchdog, recently forecasted that over the next five years, all or parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling power outages during normal peak electricity demand conditions.

It is no secret that when demand is high and supply is low, costs go up. We are concerned about threats to reliability as well as cost increases for our members.



We do not want to worry our members but do want you to understand the challenges ahead. As we have always done, we will look for solutions to serve our members best. We are joining electric co-ops across the country and our statewide trade organization, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., to fight these regulations. We are working with our local elected officials and statewide policymakers to help them understand the consequences this would have on all Kansans.

Co-ops are no strangers to innovation, and we are taking proactive steps to address today's energy challenges and tomorrow's energy needs. We have led the charge on industry endeavors and will continue to explore new technologies and strategies that bolster reliability and our local grid.

Electric cooperatives, like 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, deliver power to 42 million Americans. At the end of the day, our top priority is to meet our members' energy needs, and we must have reliable electricity available to do that.

If you are interested in learning more about policy impacts on power reliability, or to make your voice heard on this matter, visit www.voicesforcooperativepower.com.

Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. Even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs in America.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial. During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 AWARENESS

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to react if necessary.

Exposed underground power lines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact us at 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative.

SMART HARVEST SAFETY TIPS

To ensure a safer harvest season, www.SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- ▶ **EXERCISE CAUTION NEAR POWER LINES.** Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ **USE SPOTTERS WHEN OPERATING LARGE MACHINERY NEAR POWER LINES.** Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.
- ▶ **LOWER EQUIPMENT EXTENSIONS, PORTABLE AUGERS OR ELEVATORS BEFORE MOVING OR TRANSPORTING EQUIPMENT.** Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- ▶ **NEVER ATTEMPT TO RAISE OR MOVE POWER LINES TO CLEAR A PATH.** Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- ▶ **AVOID USING METAL POLES INSIDE BINS.** Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- ▶ **HIRE QUALIFIED ELECTRICIANS.** Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has contacted overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. If that happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. After exiting the vehicle, keep your feet together and hop away or shuffle your feet across the ground. Never lift a foot — this will keep you from having different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another. Then, keeping your feet together, hop at least 50 feet to safety as you leave the area.

Don't forget to contact us immediately if this happens. We are committed to keeping you and all our members safe during this vital season of economic production. Stay aware and safe out there 4 Rivers members.

5 TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

- 1** Maintain at least a 20-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
- 2** Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
- 3** Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
- 4** Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
- 5** Keep first-aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.