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620-364-2116 or 800-748-7395

**Northern District**  
2731 Milo Terr.  
Lebo, KS 66856

**Southern District**  
9346 Jewell Rd.  
Fredonia, KS 66736

**Payment Center**  
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.

#### Board of Trustees

**Michael Springer**  
President

**Robert Converse**  
Vice-President

**Gene Huston**  
Secretary

**Larry Felts**  
Treasurer

**Tom Ayers**  
Trustee

**Randall Bunnel**  
Trustee

**Nick Frankenbery**  
Trustee

**Robert Harkrader**  
Trustee

**Stacy Heins**  
Trustee

**David Kunkel**  
Trustee

**Warren Schmidt**  
Trustee

**Sandy Smith**  
Trustee

**Carol Wehmeyer**  
Trustee

#### Staff

**Dennis Svanes**  
General Manager/CEO

**Mark Doebele**  
Assistant General Manager/COO

**Roger Cole**  
CFO

**Ken Caudell**  
Manager of Member and Corporate Services

### FROM THE MANAGER

## Let Your Voice Be Heard — Vote in Trustee Elections



**Dennis Svanes**

One member, one vote — an important part of a cooperative. Democratic control is also important and one of the cooperative principles. Those who read my article regularly know that I often write about the benefits of being a cooperative member. This month is no exception. We are in the middle of our election process. You, the members, elect the board of trustees governing 4 Rivers.

Ballots were mailed to those of you in the districts in which a trustee is up for election (N2, N3 and S2). Completed ballots must be postmarked or delivered to our Lebo office no later than Feb. 20. The winners will be announced at our annual meeting March 28.

As a reminder, to appear on the ballot, eligible candidates submitted a petition with signatures from at least 20 members in their district. The petitions were due at the end of December. Ballots were mailed in January to members in the districts having elections. The candidates in the N2 and N3 districts do not have competition; however, district S2 does have two members vying

*Continued on page 12C ▶*

You Have a Voice at YOUR  
**CO-OP**

make plans to attend the

**2ND ANNUAL 4 RIVERS  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
MEETING OF THE MEMBERS**



**JOIN US MARCH 28, 2022**

**MEMORIAL HALL, INDEPENDENCE**

**410 N. PENNSYLVANIA AVE.**

PHOTO ABOVE "AUTUMNAL EQUINOX SUNSET" WAS TAKEN BY MEMBER MICHAEL HOAG OF WAVERLY. THE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS THE BEAUTY OF OUR COOPERATIVE TERRITORY.



## LIEAP Application Period Now Open

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps keep families safe and healthy by assisting eligible households with a portion of their home energy costs by providing a once-per-year benefit.

The 2022 LIEAP application period is open; applications must be received online or in a Kansas Dept. for Children and Families (DCF) office by March 31 to be considered for eligibility. For more information, call 800-432-0043 or visit [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov).

### 2022 Income Eligibility Guidelines

Persons Living at the Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,610
2	\$2,178
3	\$2,745
4	\$3,313
5	\$3,880
6	\$4,448
7	\$5,015
8	\$5,583
9	\$6,150
10	\$6,718
11	\$7,285
12	\$7,853
13	\$ 8,420
14	\$8,988
+1	\$568 for each additional person

## 4 Rivers Provides Mutual Aid to Western Kansas Co-op

### December winds result in mass outages



MIDWEST ENERGY, INC.



COLBY CRIPPEN, 4 RIVERS

4 Rivers was able to assist Midwest Energy to repair damage caused in the December windstorm and resulting wildfires.

On Dec. 15, a destructive wind with gusts over 100 mph swept through Kansas toppling trees and poles and causing outages for our cooperative and other electric providers through Kansas.

Especially hard hit was the large service area of Midwest Energy, a central/western Kansas cooperative who had nearly 26,500 customers affected by outages from this weather event. Additionally, wildfires, fueled by the fierce wind, burned 366,000 acres of farm and rangeland in multiple counties creating additional damages. Overall,

Midwest Energy had 700 poles sustain damage with around 450 burned in the wildfire and 250 broken by winds.

After making restorations to our own system after the storm, 4 Rivers sent a crew of four to assist with recovery efforts. Agreement to render mutual aid is another benefit of being a cooperative. Over the years, we have provided and received much emergency assistance from other cooperatives, another example of Cooperative Principle No. 6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip windows to seal air leaks. When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

**SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**



# Let Your Voice Be Heard Continued from page 12A ▶

for the position — **CAROL WEHMEYER**, Independence, and **LOREN DICKENS**, Cherryvale.

At a cooperative, each member gets one vote. Having multiple accounts or services does not equal additional votes, nor does having additional people on a membership — spouses, for example. Additionally, while trustees must be a real person (not a corporation, etc.), business entities can and do vote.

When 4 Rivers was in the creation phase, the two boards of trustees wanted to make sure that appearing on the ballot and voting for trustees would be as easy as possible. They eliminated the nominating committee process and

chose nomination by petition to make the process the same for anyone who wants to run for the cooperative board if they meet qualification requirements in the bylaws — membership in the co-op, real person, residency, and no conflict of interest. Mail-in ballots allow every member who chooses to vote have their vote count.

Also, this is the last year using the current voting district boundaries. The next election will have three districts instead of six, a decision made as part of the consolidation, including downsizing the number of board trustees.

If you are in an eligible district, please take part in our cooperative election process and vote.

## Every Step Counts

Take heart. February is American Heart Month and a good time to take stock of your activity, or, for some of us, the lack thereof.

Many people have good intentions to move more, but then the day unfolds with little else other than chair time. You get to work and have that sit-down meeting, a nice co-worker brings in doughnuts, and the day is filled with several work fires to put out. You vow to move more tomorrow, but tomorrow becomes a repeat of the previous day.

Instead of waiting for another day, find easy ways to increase movement today. The American Heart Association offers seven easy ways to boost your activity level with no gym membership required (although a gym is also a good way to get moving).

- ▶ Grab the leash and walk your dog. Both you and your four-legged friend will be healthier for it.
- ▶ Take your kid (or spouse or friend) for a walk. It is a great way to get face time without screens.
- ▶ Try a 10-minute home workout.

Exercising in shorter increments can improve your health because the time spent moving adds up. People usually have an extra 10 minutes here or there throughout the day but may not find a solid 30 minutes or an hour to exercise.

- ▶ Walk and talk. Or walk and work. Talk while you are on the phone or use a walking desk at work. If it is nice outside, have a walking meeting.
- ▶ Tune into fitness. Walk or jog in place, lift weights, or do yoga while you binge watch your favorite episodes.
- ▶ Ditch the car. Park farther away from the building to get in extra steps. Or, bike or walk to your destination.
- ▶ Take the stairs, even if just for a floor or two. The elevator may go up, but your heart rate will not as you press the floor number and listen to the piped-in music.

Stop putting off until tomorrow what you can do today. Look for opportunities to move more. Your heart will thank you, and every step counts!

## small steps equal **BIG STRIDES**

Increasing activity improves your physical and mental health, stress levels, sleep productivity and more.

**2.75** hours of walking each week for a year is like walking across the State of Kansas.

**30** minutes of playing tennis (singles) is like walking a 5k.

**1** hour of dancing every week for a year is like walking from Chicago to Indianapolis.



**10** minutes of stretching is like walking the length of a football field.

**20** minutes of vacuuming is like walking one mile.

**30** minutes of grocery shopping every other week for a year is like walking a marathon.

SOURCE:  
HEART.ORG

## Our Crews are Working to Serve You Help us keep them safe

- ▶ At a job site, don't ask crews what they are working on or when power will be restored. Crew members must give the repairs their full attention to ensure safety. Diverting their attention increases the amount of time it takes to resolve the issue.
- ▶ When driving by a utility truck (or any roadside vehicle with flashing lights), please move over and give them space. In a work zone, follow all signage, including speed limits. Drivers who travel through a work zone too fast endanger workers on the ground and up in the bucket.
- ▶ If one of our employees is in your yard or on an easement to address service issues, please secure your dogs. Also keep meters and pad mount transformers (green boxes) free from obstructions.
- ▶ Please be patient as we work on an outage or other issues. Safety is our top priority, for you and our employees.



## EV Safety Do's and Don'ts

Electric vehicles (EVs) are still relatively new, and many do not know proper safety procedures for charging and operating the technology. One of the most common safety missteps includes using an extension cord and inappropriate or substandard charging equipment.

Do not increase the reach of the charger's cord by using an extension cord, regardless of its rating. Extension cords cannot handle the amount of amperage that car chargers require.

Another mistake EV owners make is not using a professional charger, which can cause serious safety issues and possibly compromise your vehicle.

### Other Home-Charging Safety Tips Include:

- ▶ Purchase a charging system and equipment that is endorsed/sold by an EV manufacturer whenever possible. This is not the time to buy an off-brand or bargain.
- ▶ Ensure all charging equipment is safety tested and endorsed by a laboratory, such as UL.
- ▶ Have a Level 2 charging station, which requires a 240-volt outlet, installed by a licensed electrical contractor. Plugging an EV into a standard 120-volt outlet is considered Level 1 charging.
- ▶ Use a charger on a dedicated circuit



and make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.

- ▶ Look for excessive wear or damage, which could present a shock hazard. This also holds true for DC fast chargers, sometimes referred to as Level 3 chargers.
- ▶ Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and using your EV.
- ▶ Place all charging components out of children's reach when not in use.

If you do not yet own an EV and you are considering purchasing one, do your homework. Since EV features differ, it is a good idea to thoroughly research them before purchasing one. You will want to consider how far you would like to drive it in between charges (short-range versus extended), what type of home-charging system you will use (Level 1 or Level 2), your budget, the type of electric vehicle (SUV, sedan, truck) and the vehicle's safety ratings.

EV options are expanding quickly, and 4 Rivers Electric wants our members to be informed about those options, charging methods and how EVs can affect our co-op's demand for power.

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