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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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Serving and Caring

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Planning for the Long Haul

At our annual meeting of members in March, I mentioned that electric cooperatives don't plan in three-year cycles. We plan in decades. That may not sound very exciting, but when you're responsible for thousands of poles, miles of line, and substations spread across rural Kansas, short-term thinking simply doesn't work.

The infrastructure that serves our members isn't temporary. Many of the assets delivering electricity to your homes, farms, and businesses today were installed years — sometimes decades — ago. The decisions we make now as your cooperative won't just affect next month's electric bill. They will influence reliability and affordability for the next generation of members.

That's where strategic planning comes in.

Later this spring, your board of trustees and management team will set aside time to focus specifically on the long-term direction of 4 Rivers Electric. Strategic planning isn't a vacation disguised as a meeting. There are no beach chairs or golf carts. It will be held right here in our headquarters' board room at BETO Junction. It's a disciplined process of reviewing data, evaluating risks, and asking hard questions.

We examine the condition of our system and what it will take to maintain or upgrade it over time. We review financial strength and consider how to keep the cooperative stable in the face of rising transmission costs and material prices

that, while more stable than a few years ago, remain significantly higher than historical levels. We talk about workforce planning, cybersecurity, technology changes, and how growing demand for electricity — particularly from large commercial and data center loads — could affect the broader grid.

None of these conversations are about reacting to the moment. They're about preparation.

As a member-owned cooperative, we don't answer to outside shareholders. We answer to you. That means our responsibility is not only to keep the lights on today, but to ensure the system remains strong and sustainable for the members who will depend on it 10, 20 or 30 years from now.

Strategic planning doesn't guarantee that we can predict every challenge ahead. If it did, we'd all be spending more time buying lottery tickets. What it does guarantee is that your board and management are thinking carefully, acting deliberately, and preparing responsibly.

The goal is straightforward: to plan proactively so future members aren't burdened with fixing what we failed to anticipate. Instead, they'll inherit a cooperative that was built and maintained with them in mind.

That's the kind of long-term thinking your cooperative deserves.



Dennis Svanes

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

4 Rivers Holds 6th Annual Meeting of Members

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting of members on March 23 at the Lyon County Fairgrounds' Anderson Building in Emporia. A total of 104 registered members, as well as many guests, gathered to review cooperative business, hear reports from leadership, and review the trustee election results. Before the meeting, attendees enjoyed a meal catered by Olpe Chicken House, served by students from Emporia High School's FFA Chapter. Before the meeting started, singers from Emporia High School's vocal ensemble, Viva Voce, performed several pieces of music while members dined.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

President Larry Felts called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Secretary Warren Schmidt led the invocation, followed by a beautiful rendition of the national anthem by Viva Voce. Trustee Robert Converse led attendees in the pledge of allegiance. Throughout the evening, members enjoyed three rounds of prize giveaways.



Kevin Noblet, KEPCo, discussed industry updates during his keynote address.



Members enjoyed watching the co-op slideshow and listening to student singers during dinner.

Secretary Warren Schmidt confirmed that the annual meeting notice was sent in our centerspread of the March 2026 edition of *Kansas Country Living* magazine and declared a quorum was present. President Felts presented the meeting agenda, along with the minutes from the 2025 annual meeting, which were both approved.

CELEBRATING YOUTH PROGRAMS

4 Rivers' is committed to investing in the future of our youth. President Felts announced the selection of **KATIE HESTER** and **JULE ROLF** to represent 4 Rivers at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., in June, along with **ISAAC ARNOLD** and **ELLA ERVIN**

to represent the co-op in July at Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Colorado. Additionally, **ASHTON ONEAL** and **REECE BUDKE**

were recognized as the 2025 lineworker scholarship recipients.

FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS REPORTS

Treasurer Loren Dickens reported that 2025 was a solid year, with approximately \$29.1 million in revenue, total equity of 52.1%, and \$986,000 in capital credits returned to members. He also reported that the cooperative secured a zero-interest USDA Rural Economic Development Loan on behalf of Hometown Pies and received a clean audit from Eide Bailly.

General Manager/CEO Dennis Svanes recognized veterans, employees and guests, and provided an update on industry conditions, including inflationary pressures, supply chain stabilization, increasing demand for electricity, and rising transmission costs. Svanes discussed the recent rate adjustment



Staff engaged with members before the meeting at co-op information stations.

Reducing the Risk of Wildfires

May is National Wildfire Awareness Month

Wildfire risk is increasing across the country — including here in Kansas. Dry conditions, wind and changing weather patterns mean fires can start and spread quickly, even in areas that haven't traditionally faced this threat.

At 4 Rivers Electric, reducing wildfire risk is part of our year-round commitment to safety and reliability. One of the most effective ways we do this is through vegetation management. Crews regularly trim and remove trees and brush near power lines to help prevent contact that could spark a fire, especially during hot, dry and windy conditions.

Electric cooperatives across Kansas are also working together to strengthen wildfire preparedness. Through Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), co-ops partner with state agencies,

first responders and industry experts to improve planning, coordination and response.

Wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. Small actions at home can make a big difference:

- ▶ Avoid outdoor burning on windy or very dry days.
- ▶ Keep areas around your home and other structures clear of dry vegetation and debris.
- ▶ Fully extinguish fires before leaving them unattended.
- ▶ Stay aware of local burn restrictions.

While wildfires can't always be prevented, preparation and awareness go a long way in reducing risk. We are committed to helping protect our communities and the places we call home.



Board President Larry Felts addressed the membership on cooperative updates.

effective March 1 and emphasized the cooperative's focus on reliability and long-term planning. Svanes then introduced the keynote speaker.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND INDUSTRY UPDATES

Kevin Noblet, CEO of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), provided an overview of KEPCo operations, transmission cost increases, regional power market dynamics, and future industry challenges and opportunities.

TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

General Counsel Will Wohlford reported the results of the March 16, 2026, trustee elections. **ROBERT CONVERSE** was elected in District 1 with 229 votes, **RANDY BUNNEL** was elected in District 2 with 207 votes, and **CAROL WEHMEYER** was elected in District 3 with 199 votes, all unopposed.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING TRUSTEE

President Felts recognized Trustee **TOM AYERS** for over 27 years of service to the cooperative and expressed appreciation for his contributions.

ADJOURNMENT

President Felts called for new business, and none was presented. With no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative appreciates the continued support and engagement of its members and looks forward to another successful year.

HOME IGNITION ZONE CHECKLIST

Follow these simple steps from roof to foundation to reduce wildfire risk.

- ▶ Clear leaves, pine needles and debris from roofs, gutters, decks and patios.
- ▶ Keep lawns watered and maintained so it's less likely to catch fire.
- ▶ Replace or repair loose or missing shingles and roof tiles.
- ▶ Install 1/8-inch metal mesh screening on vents for your attic, roof and eaves.
- ▶ Repair damaged or loose window screens and replace broken windows.
- ▶ Repair or maintain siding, trim and exterior joints so embers cannot lodge in gaps.
- ▶ Seal gaps and openings around the foundation and where utilities enter the home.
- ▶ Keep lawnmowers, oil or gas cans, propane tanks and wood piles at least 30 feet from your home.
- ▶ Install a metal gate or section if a wooden fence attaches to the house.
- ▶ Remove anything stored under decks or porches, and screen openings to prevent debris buildup.
- ▶ Remove flammable objects like lawn furniture.
- ▶ Swap mulch for gravel or stone near the home.

SOURCES: NFPA, SMOKEYBEAR.COM/HOME-SAFETY, WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



How to Protect Your Home From a Wildfire

Wildfires move fast, but research shows that most homes don't ignite from an unstoppable wall of flames. They ignite from embers — tiny burning pieces of wood or vegetation that can travel over a mile in the wind and land on or near your home. The good news? There are steps you can take to help your home withstand nearby flames.

The most important area to focus on is your Home Ignition Zone — your house and its 200-foot perimeter. Think of it in three layers: closest, middle and outer. Let's walk through what to do in each.

THE IMMEDIATE ZONE (0-5 FEET FROM YOUR HOME)

This is the most important zone. Start here. Your goal: create a clean, non-combustible buffer.

- ▶ Clear leaves, pine needles, and debris from roofs and gutters.
- ▶ Repair missing or loose shingles and roof tiles.
- ▶ Screen vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh to block embers.
- ▶ Repair damaged window screens and replace broken windows.
- ▶ Remove mulch, firewood, plants, leaves and anything that can burn from around the house.
- ▶ Don't store anything under decks or porches; screen openings to prevent debris buildup.
- ▶ Keep the 5 feet closest to buildings, structures, and decks clear of flammable materials. Swap mulch for gravel or crushed stone.

THE INTERMEDIATE ZONE (5-30 FEET)

This is your landscaping safety zone. The goal is to slow and reduce fire.

- ▶ Keep grass trimmed to 4 inches or shorter.
- ▶ Trim limbs off tree trunks to at least 10 feet above the ground.
- ▶ Space tree canopies at least 18 feet apart (more if on a slope).
- ▶ Make sure mature trees are 10-20 feet away from the home.

WILDFIRE GO BAG *Checklist*

- ❑ Cellphone & Charger
- ❑ Clothing & Toiletries
- ❑ Face Masks
- ❑ First Aid
- ❑ Flashlight & Batteries
- ❑ Food & Water
- ❑ Important Documents & Photos
- ❑ Medications
- ❑ Pet Essentials



HOME HARDENING CHECKLIST

Small upgrades can make a big difference when embers fly.

ROOF AND VENTS:

- ❑ Choose a Class A fire-rated roof (e.g., metal, composite shingles, tile or concrete).
- ❑ Cover attic and roof vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh.

SIDING AND WINDOWS:

- ❑ Use fire-resistant materials like brick, fiber-cement, stucco or treated wood.
- ❑ Install dual-pane tempered glass windows to resist cracking from heat.

- ▶ Remove shrubs and low branches below trees to prevent fire from climbing.
- ▶ Clear plants and grass around propane tanks.
- ▶ Create fuel breaks with walkways, gravel paths, patios or driveways.

THE EXTENDED ZONE (30-200 FEET)

The goal here is to interrupt the fire's path and keep flames small and on the ground.

- ▶ Remove piles of leaves, fallen branches and dead plants.
- ▶ Remove small conifer trees growing between larger mature trees.
- ▶ Clear vegetation around sheds and outbuildings.
- ▶ Leave at least 12 feet between canopy tops for trees 30 to 60 feet from the home.*
- ▶ Leave at least 6 feet between canopy tops for trees 60 to 100 feet from the home.*

ACCESS AND EMERGENCY PREP

When every minute counts, make it easy to get help.

- ▶ Clearly mark your home address with numbers visible from the road.
- ▶ Know two ways out of your neighborhood.
- ▶ Have a predetermined meeting place.
- ▶ Make a wildfire evacuation plan; include your pets and livestock.
- ▶ Leave early if you feel unsafe — don't wait to be told.

You don't need to fireproof your entire property to make a difference. The small details closest to your home could determine whether it withstands a wildfire. One weekend of cleanup and some thoughtful upgrades can dramatically shift the odds in your favor and bring peace of mind for seasons to come.

*DISTANCES SUGGESTED ARE BASED ON NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA) GUIDELINES. HOWEVER, THE SPACING REQUIRED COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER DUE TO SLOPE, TREE SPECIES AND OTHER SITE-SPECIFIC CONDITIONS.

SOURCES: NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA), SMOKEYBEAR.COM