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PRAIRIE LAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

## PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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**Kirk Girard**

CEO

## FROM THE CEO

# Preparing for the Future

No one knows what the future holds, and while we live in uncertain times, preparing for the future is essential. Benjamin Franklin said, "Failure to prepare is preparing to fail."

Prairie Land has been preparing for the future this past year in many ways. Last April, Prairie Land partnered with the National Rural Telecommunication Cooperative (NRTC) to develop a 10-year Grid Technology Plan to enhance Prairie Land's electric distribution system. NRTC completed the detailed plan in late 2024, identifying key smart grid components and implementation strategies to improve critical infrastructure, service reliability, and outage response times. There are two main implementation phases that include installing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and automatic circuit reclosers (ACRs).

**1 UTILIZING A SCADA SYSTEM WILL ESTABLISH A SMART GRID BACKBONE.** This computer-based system will provide centralized, real-

time monitoring and control of the distribution network, collect data from field devices to detect faults, and monitor system health.

**2 OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, WE WILL BEGIN TO REPLACE OUTDATED SUBSTATION RECLOSURES AND ELECTRONIC CONTROLS WITH NEW**

**ACRS.** Upgrading to smart controls-enabled ACR technology will improve system reliability, reduce service interruptions, and mitigate the fire risk from downed power lines, supporting the cooperative's improved safety and efficiency goals.

To help cover the costs of these initiatives, we will use Federal Emergency Management Agency funding and apply for a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Energy under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan



Kirk Girard

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## POWER LINE ISSUES

Call 800-577-3323 to report outages and other power line issues.

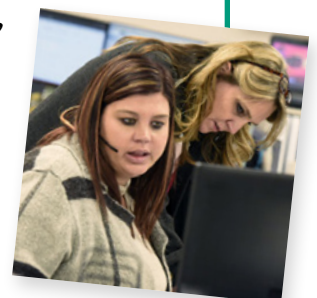
**POWER**  
*to make life better*

**BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL COOPERATIVE, THERE IS AN AWESOME OFFICE STAFF!**

## ADMIN PROFESSIONALS DAY APRIL 23, 2025

This month, we will be celebrating all careers that power Prairie Land's progress.

To learn more about the team behind the scenes, follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PLECOOP](http://www.facebook.com/PLECOOP).



# We LIVE Here

## Excerpt from the 2024 Annual Report



### Safety Posters

Our annual safety poster contest for third graders (above) is one of the key ways we engage with and commit to the youth in our territory.



### Rodeo

We proudly sponsored and served the meal on "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" night at the Phillipsburg rodeo.

### Storm Restoration

Lineworkers repair damaged utility poles (right) in the aftermath of the Dresden storm, working around the clock to restore power and support the community's recovery efforts.



### Kid's Cafe

In Norton, employees volunteered to pass out a week's supply of groceries for children at the Kid's Cafe (left).



### OK Kids Day

Our staff volunteered at the OK Kids Day held at Prairie Dog State Park in Norton, helping future linemen get a hands-on feel for the trade while teaching electric safety.



### Youth Tour

Each year, high school juniors are offered a chance to win one of four all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado, through the Youth Program Contest.

**“The future depends on what we do in the present.”**

— Mahatma Gandhi



### Parades

Having lineworkers drive in parades (left) and toss treats creates an opportunity to make special memories with local children.



### High Voltage Safety Demos

Start early and repeat often — our lineworkers appreciate any opportunity to educate the public (right) on the inherent dangers associated with electricity.



### Community Service

We look forward to helping the communities we serve. Each year, Prairie Land staff use our equipment to hang Christmas decorations (above left) for several small towns in our service area. Employees also purchase gifts for children who participate in the Christmas Blessings program (above right) offered through Goddard Place near Penokee.

## Preparing for the Future Continued from page 12A ▶

Infrastructure Law. Managed by the Kansas Corporation Commission, this grant program aims to strengthen the electric grid and enhance its resilience against storms and other disruptions. By investing in these upgrades, we are building a stronger, smarter electric grid that will serve our members reliably for years to come.

Alongside the Grid Technology Plan, Prairie Land has made several other investments to prepare for the future. This past year, we completed a large substation project — the expansion and upgrade of our Smith Center 115kV substation. Most of our distribution equipment was at the end of its life, and we were having problems acquiring parts to keep the existing equipment functional. The project included enlarging the overall footprint, installing new distribution feeder equipment, and building a new control house.

As many members know, we also started a major meter exchange project for residential and small commercial services in late 2023. The current meters that were installed in 2012 were starting to fail at a high rate as they were nearing the end of their expected useful life. Replacing the older type with the same upgraded meters as used for other non-residential services will

allow us to streamline our process and continue to provide our members with the best possible service. The upgraded meters will report on key characteristics such as energy consumption used for billing, and voltage levels and current, which are used to help us operate the system more efficiently.

These are just some of the projects we invested in during 2024. We believe that ongoing maintenance of our electric distribution grid is essential in providing a reliable and resilient system. Through continued system upgrades, equipment and pole replacements, pole testing, and proper line and vegetation management practices, we can ensure our system will function to minimize the number of members affected by unanticipated system interruptions. In other words, we want to do our best to ensure that when you flip the light switch, the lights turn on.

Preparing for 2025 and the beyond, Prairie Land is determined to keep adapting to the future while maintaining our unwavering commitment to serve our members. Prairie Land will continue to dedicate all its resources to improving the quality of life for our members and supporting our communities by providing safe, reliable energy services and education.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### ANN COX

#### ANN COX

has been with Prairie Land for 10 years. She and her husband, Brad, farm in Long Island,



Ann Cox

Kansas. They have four boys — Brant, Camden, Kale and Kai. Ann is the proud grandmother of Ridley and Kollins, with another grandchild on the way.

Ann began her career in April 2015 with a part-time position in the billing department, working at the remit desk and handling billing projects. She transitioned to a full-time role as a member service representative in September 2016, and by February 2018, she became a billing clerk.

Outside of work, Ann enjoys riding horses, horse camping, fishing, and helping on the farm. She treasures spending time with her family, especially her grandkids.

# WIRED FOR SERVICE

We thank electrical lineworkers  
for their commitment  
to powering our local communities.

LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY  
APRIL 14, 2025

