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www.prairielandelectric.com

PRAIRIE LAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

## PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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CEO

## FROM THE CEO

### Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Prairie Land Electric is deeply committed to our consumer-members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the

communities they serve. For Prairie Land Electric, our mission has always been to provide you with safe, reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Prairie Land Electric, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody



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*

*October is National*

**CO-OP MONTH**

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

*That's the power of co-op membership.*

# LOOK UP

Before You Climb

Using a ladder near overhead power lines could cause electrocution.

1. Keep yourself and equipment 10 feet from overhead power lines.
  - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
  - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
2. Use a ladder during ideal weather conditions.
  - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
  - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
3. Do not trim trees/branches that are near power lines.
  - ▶ It is dangerous to trim near overhead power lines.
  - ▶ By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.
4. Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.
  - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
  - ▶ Always follow the 10-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.



Follow manufacturer's safety recommendations when using a ladder. Look up before you climb.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

## Prairie Land Welcomes New Employees

**LAURIE SHINN** started her career with Prairie Land on Aug. 28, 2024, as an accountant II.

Shinn was raised in Littleton, Colorado, but has lived in Norton for the past 25 years. She attended Colby Community College and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in management from the University of Phoenix.

Shinn and her husband, Harold, live in rural Norton and have four adult children and six grandchildren. After work, she likes to spend time with the grandkids and ride her Harley Davidson Street Glide. This is her third Harley and she has been riding independently since 2016.



Laurie Shinn



Hunter Dougherty

**HUNTER DOUGHERTY** started his career with Prairie Land on Sept. 3, 2024, as an apprentice lineworker in the Phillipsburg area. He previously worked as a splicer in Wichita for Evergy.

Dougherty and his fiance, Claire, are returning to Phillips County where they grew up. He is a graduate of Phillipburg High School. In his free time, Dougherty enjoys hunting and working on trucks.

### Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose *Continued from page 12A* ▶

the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

- ▶ **OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.
- ▶ **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.
- ▶ **MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Prairie Land Electric, this happens through paying your energy bills.
- ▶ **AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.
- ▶ **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees and the board of trustees have the training and information

they need to make the co-op successful. At Prairie Land Electric, we also provide electric safety training for our members and their families.

This helps spread the safety message and ensure safety around the co-op's electric infrastructure.

- ▶ **COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.
- ▶ **CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for our members and support our communities by providing safe, reliable energy services and education. Our purpose is people — the local communities we're proud to serve.

# HOW TO AVOID SCAMS WHEN CONSIDERING SOLAR



Competition in the solar panel industry is fierce. While there are many trustworthy and reliable solar panel companies in the market, there are others that see the popularity of solar and want to get a piece of the pie using less scrupulous methods. Follow these tips to avoid being scammed:

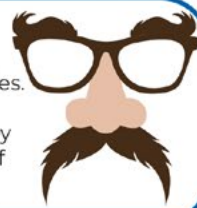
## CALL YOUR CO-OP

Installing solar is a major decision. Contacting your local electric co-op is a smart first step. Your co-op can provide valuable guidance and resources to help make informed decisions.



## BEWARE OF IMPOSTERS

Some scammers dress up as official representatives from utility companies. They might knock on your door and use words that make it seem like they are legitimate. Always ask for proof of identification and verify their credentials before signing anything.



## DON'T GIVE IN TO PRESSURE

Con artists want to provoke an emotional reaction that would cause you to give in to their requests without thinking it through. If someone uses aggressive sales tactics on you, it's best to cut off communication immediately.



## DON'T FALL FOR FREE PANELS & EQUIPMENT

Solar panels cost money, and these ads are intentionally misleading attempts to push solar. Advertising free solar panels and equipment is deceptive and dishonest.



## ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

Avoid businesses that promote unrealistic perks and giveaways through emails, social media posts or pop-ups. They may feature free solar panels or other enticing items, often with urgent sales deadlines.



## GET COMPETING BIDS

Get in touch with several solar installers and ask for bids from each one. These bids can help you spot any possible scams or unethical behaviors more easily.



## ASK PLENTY OF QUESTIONS AND CONSIDER THE ANSWERS

Inquire about any parts of a proposal that are unclear to you. If the company reacts negatively to your questions, avoids answering them or provides vague responses, take it as a warning sign.



## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Authentic incentive programs and trustworthy solar energy contractors are available. Prior to agreeing to any unsolicited offers, take the time to research solar companies in your area.\*



\*Evaluate their reputations and business ethics. Request references from past clients and engage with them to learn about their firsthand experiences.



**CONTACT US:**  
800.577.3323

**POWER**  
to make life better

## COLD WEATHER ACCOMMODATION

Prairie Land wants to help members maintain electric service during winter while recognizing the member's responsibility to plan to pay for service received. The Cold Weather Accommodation allows members to set up payment plans to make sure both goals are met.

### HOW TO QUALIFY:

- ▶ Contact cooperative if you can't pay your bill.
- ▶ **OPTIONS:**
  - ▶ Pay 1/12 of the total due plus all disconnection/reconnection fees, and spread the rest over 11 months OR negotiate payment plan to pay overdue amount in under 12 months.
  - ▶ You must continue paying the current monthly bill.
  - ▶ If you're behind on a previous plan, make a new agreement.

### THE COOPERATIVE WILL:

- ▶ Inform members of Cold Weather Accommodation and any other available payment plans.
- ▶ Provide the member with a 10-day written notice before disconnection and attempt a phone or personal contact the day before.
- ▶ Share information on agencies offering financial assistance.

### DISCONNECTION POLICY:

- ▶ Disconnection won't occur if temperatures are forecast below 35 F within the next 24 hours.
- ▶ Disconnection may happen when temperatures are forecast above 35 F for 48 hours unless payment arrangements are made.

Cold Weather Accommodation is in effect Nov. 1 through March 31 and applies to existing residential members at their primary residence, subject to the rules and regulations.

## Prairie Land Congratulates Employees for Years of Service

**MONICA KATS** began her employment with Prairie Land on Oct. 21, 2009, as an accountant. She transitioned to administration specialist in Nov. 2022.



**Monica Kats**  
15 Years

In 2009, Monica and her family moved back to this area to work on the family farming operation.

She and her husband, Sean, have three children: Lexi, 22; Ellie, 19; and Ayston, 17.

In her spare time, she enjoys attending Ayston's activities, visiting her other two daughters, and spending time with family and friends.

**RYAN SWATZELL** began his employment with Prairie Land on Oct. 6, 2014, as an apprentice lineworker in Phillipsburg. He advanced to journeyman lineworker in 2017.



**Ryan Swatzell**  
10 Years

Swatzell lives in Phillipsburg with his wife, Emily, and their three children: Macy, 7; Emmett, 4; and Mallory, 1. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and fishing.



*Each October, we're reminded of our cooperative principles and how much our members mean to us. This year, we are once again showing our appreciation by giving away prizes and bill credits each Friday in October. Your entry stays in the drawing each week, so the sooner you enter, the more chances you have to win. Use the QR code to enter online, or complete and return this entry form to*

**P.O. Box 360, Norton, KS 67654.**



### CO-OP MONTH GIVEAWAY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member for: \_\_\_\_\_ months/years