



P.O. Box 360, 14935 U.S. Highway 36, Norton, KS 67654  
785-877-3323 or 800-577-3323  
[www.prairielandelectric.com](http://www.prairielandelectric.com)

**PRAIRIE LAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# NEWS

## Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc

### Board of Trustees

**Ronald Griffith** President

**Mike Rogers** Vice President

**Sandy Benoit** Secretary

**Robert Paxson** Treasurer

**Ivan Bohl** Trustee

**Otto Levin** Trustee

**William Peterson** Trustee

**Keith Ross** Trustee

**Lowell Thoman** Trustee

**Scott Urban** Trustee

**Eric Witmer** Trustee

### Staff

**Kirk Girard**  
Chief Executive Officer

### Power Line Issues

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

**POWER**  
*to make life better*

## Factors That Impact Electricity Prices

I was recently asked by a long-time member about what impacts electricity prices. We talked about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's issue of *Kansas Country Living*.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Prairie Land Electric can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are three primary parts to a monthly residential electric bill: a service access charge, an energy charge (kWh) and a Power Cost Adjustment

(PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a **FIXED MONTHLY SERVICE ACCESS CHARGE**, which covers

the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Prairie Land Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a tall metal can at the



Kirk Girard

**Continued on page 12C ►**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room. **SOURCE: [WWW.ENERGY.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGY.GOV)**



# Prairie Land Sends Local Students to Tour Nation's Capital

**SKYLAR KAHRS** and **ARABELLA WERNECKE** were among 27 Kansas student delegates to attend the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held June 15-22. They were juniors at Clifton Clyde Senior High School when selected to represent Prairie Land at this exclusive opportunity to experience the country's history and government firsthand. While exploring Washington, D.C., students learned more about America's electric cooperatives and developed valuable leadership skills.

The 2023 Youth Tour began in Topeka with a get-acquainted dinner for the students, followed by a night tour of the Kansas State Capitol led by State Treasurer Steven Johnson and Kansas Representative Kyle Hoffman, both alumni of the Kansas electric cooperative youth programs. Before departing for Washington, D.C., students visited with linemen at FreeState Electric Cooperative where they learned about the co-op's commitment to safety and the safety gear they wear, then had the opportunity to ride in a bucket truck.

The seven-day trip to D.C. included a tour of the U.S. Capitol, the White House, the Smithsonian museums, the Holocaust Memorial Museum,

Arlington National Cemetery and Mount Vernon. The students helped raise the garrison flag at Fort McHenry, experienced an elevator ride to the top of the Washington Monument and completed a driving simulation at the Law Enforcement Museum.

Kansas delegates joined 1,531 youth from 44 other states to attend a day of inspirational programming at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) National Youth Day on June 17. Paralympic Gold Medalist Mike Schlappi addressed the students and motivated them for success as future leaders. Other speakers included Mat Kilgore, a lineman from Iowa Lakes Electric Co-op, who shared stories from his time in Guatemala with NRECA International, and Rukaya Alrubaye, the NRECA Youth Leadership Council spokesperson, sponsored by Ozarks Electric in Arkansas, who encouraged the students to dream big.

The Kansas student delegates witnessed government in action by engaging with United States Senators Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall. The Kansas legislators answered questions from the students ranging in topics including the farm bill, crop insurance, labor shortages, the impact of a flat tax, and how students can succeed in future internships.

For Kahrs and Wernecke, attending the youth tour as a representative of the cooperative was an inspirational experience.

"Mike Schlappi's speech about overcoming his obstacles after being shot and paralyzed was very inspiring," Kahrs said. "It taught me to continue to make my life the best I can under any circumstance."

"The whole district of Washington, D.C., inspired me," Wernecke said. "I was reminded of the sacrifices of the individuals that helped build our country and give me the freedom and liberties that I have today. It inspired me to want to do good for my country."



Skylar Kahrs at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.

At the conclusion of the conference, Brinlie Stevens, sponsored by Wheatland Electric Cooperative, was elected to be the 2024 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council after being interviewed by a panel of chaperones and receiving the majority of votes from her fellow Youth Tour delegates.

"Seeing all the things that we have been learning about in history since we were little kids was so amazing," Stevens said. "It was incredible to see how generous our electric cooperatives are in providing an experience like this."

Stevens will have the opportunity to travel to San Antonio, Texas, and open the general session at PowerXchange, NRECA's Annual Meeting.

Kansas Youth Tour alumni are eligible to apply for the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC) Auxiliary Scholarship and the NRECA Glenn English Scholarship.

Sponsoring local students for the youth tour is one of the most important ways that Prairie Land upholds the cooperative principle of education, training and information. We are proud to have this unique opportunity to build upon the leadership potential of the next generation.



Arabella Wernecke in front of the White House.

# Prairie Land Welcomes New Employee


**DAVID PERRIN** joined the Prairie Land family as a journeyman lineworker serving the Oberlin area starting June 12, 2023.

David grew up in Oberlin and earned his lineworker certificate from Pratt Community College.

David and his wife, Amanda, have two dogs — Max and Tru. In his spare time, David enjoys hiking, camping and riding motorcycles.



David Perrin



Each school year, we look forward to judging hundreds of safety posters from third graders across the territory, and interviewing another group of high school juniors for the youth tour and leadership camp. Here's to a great school year, and an impressive group of students to feature in these pages in future issues.

## Factors That Impact Electricity Prices *Continued from page 12A* ►

top of a power pole) went from \$741 in 2021 to \$1524 this year, and wait times to receive these essential components are up to six months. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note that the service access charge is the same for everyone in each rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the **kWh ENERGY CHARGE**, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by fluctuating temperatures. When temperatures go up or down, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat

is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months.

The last component of your bill is the **PCA**, which is the same amount for all co-op members. The PCA varies in correlation with power costs, which means the electricity that Prairie Land Electric purchases from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, our wholesale provider, can vary from month to month. The PCA covers power cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of energy and equipment, please know Prairie Land Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home.

## 4 KEY FACTORS THAT IMPACT ENERGY BILLS

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.

### 1 Power Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost to generate electricity fluctuates, which is one reason you see a power charge adjustment on your monthly bill. This charge or credit accounts for cost changes without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



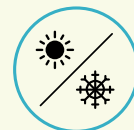
### 2 Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance and additional costs necessary to provide reliable electric service.



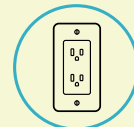
### 3 Weather

When temperatures vary, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. This, in turn, can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases as people use more heating and air conditioning, the price of power typically rises.



### 4 Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). You control how much energy you use, which can ultimately help you manage your monthly costs.





## Get Proper Rest During Harvest

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are often at their highest.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist.

"Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- ▶ Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- ▶ Limit electronic device use.
- ▶ Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi.

"By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



### INSPECT IT REGULARLY



#### MAKE SURE FENCING IS VISIBLE.

Use electric fence tape, warning signs or other methods.

#### INSPECT FENCING REGULARLY.

Ensure everything is tight, secure and free from frays.



#### MAKE SURE FENCE IS TIGHT AND WELL-SUPPORTED.

A lack of support can cause it to sag.

#### CAP POSTS, ESPECIALLY METAL T-POSTS.

This prevents an animal (or human) from being impaled.



#### CHECK FOR A LOOSE OR SAGGING FENCE.

Not only can animals escape, but wires can fall out of insulators.

SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY