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## PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

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

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### FROM THE CEO

## Beat the Peak This Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer.

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48% of energy expenditures just on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Although a majority of that figure is spent on heating, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, high-efficiency model, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency and reduce your energy bills.

Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors in your home (always a good idea regardless of the time of year), consider the following:

- ▶ Close curtains, blinds and shades

during the hottest part of the day. Not only is about one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but about 76% of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to www.energy.gov.



Kirk Girard

- ▶ If you don't already have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10% a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to www.energy.gov.
- ▶ Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- ▶ Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade

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## Newell Retires After 44 Years of Service



Dave Newell

**DAVE NEWELL** came to Prairie Land as an apprentice lineworker for the Norton construction crew in May 1978. In 1981, he advanced to journeyman lineworker and two years later, he accepted a promotion to lead lineworker.

In 1992, he was promoted to crew foreman, and in 2002, to construction foreman, which he continued for the next 20 years.

In his 44 years serving the cooperative, Dave was well-known for his great cooking and fun-loving attitude. We will miss him, and we hope he enjoys his well-deserved retirement.

# Sunflower Prepares for Summer Peak Conditions

Summer did not officially arrive until June 21, but Mother Nature doesn't adhere to the calendar in Kansas. We have already seen a wide range of temperatures, with some areas of the state reaching or nearing 100 degrees as early as May.

High temperatures increase electric demand when electric consumers crank up air conditioners to stay cool. In recent reports, the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) said these high temperatures, combined with other conditions, could lead to an unstable electric supply during peak summer conditions. Other conditions include widespread droughts, which increase electricity demand for irrigation; the growing possibilities of extreme weather events; naturally diminished wind energy output during hot days; and rail shipping interruptions and export issues for coal deliveries to power plants.

The reports by NERC and FERC indicate that the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), the regional grid operator that manages the transmission grid in 14 states including Kansas, is included in the areas of elevated risk for summer reliability issues.

While the recent reports by NERC and FERC were not optimistic news for electric utilities — like Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc. and our wholesale power and transmission supplier, Sunflower Electric Power Corp. — meeting electricity demand is always at the forefront of operational and financial strategies. Sunflower continually evaluates anticipated electric demand and takes strategic steps to meet the typical energy demand of electricity consumers served by its six-member distribution cooperatives and the energy demand in energy-peaking situations, such as very hot summer days.

The recent reports underscore the importance of Sunflower's balanced generation resource portfolio and calculated oper-

ating strategies. Sunflower's fuel-diverse generation fleet — which includes coal and natural gas units, as well as energy contracts for wind, solar and hydro — serves as a hedge against rising prices of a particular fuel resource. For example, the price of coal is very stable compared to the volatility of natural gas pricing and is an effective hedge against the price of market energy, which is usually correlated to the price of natural gas. The coal-based Holcomb Station remained a reliable and cost-effective generation source during Winter Storm Uri in 2021.

Coal deliveries have been impacted by railroad staffing issues and Sunflower is re-evaluating how to deploy Holcomb Station to capitalize on its benefits during summer peak conditions. Sunflower proactively purchased more market energy products to guard against possible exceptionally high prices this summer and continue its mission of providing reliable energy to its member-owners at the lowest possible price.

"There are a lot of variables intrinsic to supplying reliable energy as economically as possible, but we are analyzing future scenarios to best prepare for possible unusual summer conditions," said Corey Linville, Sunflower's vice president of power supply and delivery, "We believe we have a strong operating and financial hedging plan in place to help guard against electric interruptions and high cost spikes."

The SPP is also modifying its strategies to fortify the electric grid during extreme conditions. The SPP requires its member utilities to have fuel resources that equate to 12% more than their annual peak load requirements, but Winter Storm Uri revealed potential issues with available capacity during such events. Some of these issues are associated with forced out-

ages, as well as electric generating resources that have fuel supply issues, such as natural gas, during these times. The lack of availability of energy from renewable resources is also an issue. The summer of 2021 experienced several periods when the reliability margin (difference between available capacity and plus contingency reserve requirements) in SPP dropped below 20%.

It will take several years to fully implement SPP's new supply adequacy rules and for load serving entities to firm up existing capacity and procure any needed new capacity to comply with the new rules. In the meantime, SPP will, at times, continue to operate with a relatively low-reliability margin.

"The electric industry is ever evolving," said Stuart Lowry, Sunflower's president and CEO. "The regional energy market brings many benefits but also many new challenges, including the risk of generation resource and operational decisions made by other utilities. Our members and those they serve can have confidence that we will analyze and respond to these risks with their best interests in mind."

## Signs of Summer



We get a lot more opportunities to serve the youth in our communities as the school year ends. **JAKE EPLEY** kept a bucket truck nearby to rescue rockets that were launched into trees by fourth graders on May 10. **ERIC THOMPSON** helped get third graders in full safety gear to drop engineered egg containers from a bucket truck on May 11. **SHAWN MILLER** helped cook 758 hot dogs for OK Kids Day at Sebelius Lake on June 4.

# MEET OUR SUMMER INTERNS



**KADEN SHELLITO** began interning with the Phillipsburg line crews on May 16. He is a graduate of Logan High School and will complete his lineworker program at Pratt Community College in August 2022.

Kaden lives in Logan. In his spare time, he likes to hunt, fish and trap.



**NICK WITHINGTON** began interning with the St. Francis line crews on May 16. He is a graduate of Atwood High School and will complete his lineworker program at Manhattan Technical School in December 2022.

Nick lives in Atwood. In his spare time, he likes to fish, trap and hunt.



**DILLON WILLIAMS** began interning with the Concordia line crews on May 20 after completing the lineworker program at Pratt Community College. He is a graduate of Holcomb High School and Garden City Community College.

Dillon lives in Concordia and likes to hunt and fish.



**LUKE BOSTON** began interning with the Norton line crews on June 1 after completing his lineworker training at Pratt Community College.

Luke's hometown is Newton and he is currently living in Norton. In his spare time, he likes to hang out with friends.

## Beat the Peak This Summer

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trees and plants that insulate the foundation can reduce energy costs.

- ▶ Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can help prevent hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. By addressing air leaks around your home and adding insulation, homeowners can save around 10% annually on energy bills, according to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).
- ▶ Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, which could help your air conditioner run more efficiently.
- ▶ Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade.
- ▶ Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day.
- ▶ Consider a professional energy audit to reveal where your home is inefficient, including air leaks and exposed duct work.

Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

## LeDuc Completes 15 Years of Service

**JAMIE LEDUC** began her employment with Prairie Land Electric on July 9, 2007, as a customer service representative in the Concordia office. She was promoted to operations assistant in October 2020.

LeDuc and her husband, Justin, have three adult children, a senior, a 7-year-old and a new grandson. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and gardening.

Prairie Land extends congratulations and appreciation to Jamie for 15 years!



**Jamie LeDuc**  
15 Years

## Prairie Land Welcomes New Employee

**JACOB LARSON** began working for Prairie Land May 31 as an apprentice lineworker in his hometown of Hill City. He previously apprenticed for the city of Hill City.

Jacob completed his lineworker program at Pratt Community College. In his spare time, Jacob enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with his friends and family.



**Jacob Larson**



Saint Francis Crew Foreman RYAN CULWELL climbs a pole May 25 during pole top rescue training. The training is repeated every year to drill this life-saving skill into all our lineworkers.

## Do Your Part to Keep Lineworkers Safe

It's nearing 5 p.m. on a workday. Your boss wanted that last-minute report and your kids need to be picked up from soccer or play practice. You jump in your car and on the way you approach a work zone. You don't have time to slow down so you rush through it and ignore the orange work zone signs.

***You're having a garage sale and you think posting a sign on a utility pole won't hurt. Everyone does it, right?***

Either of these scenarios could injure or kill one of our lineworkers.

The job of an electric lineworker is not easy. Lineworkers take great pride in providing safe and reliable service, but their job involves working on and around live power out in the elements. We ask you to do your part to keep them safe.

Slow down and move over in work zones. Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground but also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in danger by causing it to move or sway.

Do not post anything on a utility pole, especially with staples, nails or tacks. These can puncture insulated gloves or other protective clothing and expose workers to high voltages.

Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet. The power that back feeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker.

Please be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power.

We appreciate your help in keeping our employees safe. For questions about employee safety, contact John Atkins at 785-877-3323. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**CAUTION!**

## Third-Party Payment Services

Whether they intend to or not, sometimes our members end up using third-party services instead of paying their bill directly to Prairie Land. While these services often work just fine, there are also situations where payments have been sent to the wrong utility or have arrived after the due date.

The most affordable (**TRULY FREE**), safe and secure form of payment is SmartHub, Prairie Land Electric's online bill payment site. We also offer several other secure payment choices.

If you do choose to utilize a third-party payment processor, please be aware that they may charge additional fees and that the payment will not be applied to your electric account until it is received by Prairie Land. While the processor charges your account immediately, they typically mail a paper check to your utility company, delaying the receipt of the payment by 7-10 days.

For more details, visit our website at <https://www.prairielandelectric.com/third-party-bill-payment-services>