



P.O. Box 360, 14935 U.S. Highway 36, Norton, KS 67654  
785-877-3323 or 800-577-3323  
www.prairielandelectric.com

PRAIRIE LAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

## Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc

### Board of Trustees

- Ronald Griffith** President
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### 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*

## Playing It Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Prairie Land Electric, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month I'd like to share

a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Prairie Land Electric is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

► **IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (ALSO KNOWN AS TWO-STEP VERIFICATION) ON YOUR ACCOUNTS.** The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable



Kirk Girard

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## MANY MEMBERS TO GET NEW METERS

Prairie Land Electric will change out 15,000 meters beginning in October 2023. Meters that are reaching their end of life will be replaced with upgraded meters. This is a long-term project and is projected to be completed in January 2025. As supplies arrive and installs are scheduled, affected members will be contacted by phone.

Crews can be identified by the Prairie Land logo on their shirts and vehicles. They will knock at the door to alert residents when they arrive, but members do not need to be home when the switch is made. There will be a one-minute disruption in service during the change-out.



## Playing It Safe Online Continued from page 12A ►

to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

- **UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- **THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK.** Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cybercriminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.
- **CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS, USING LONG, UNIQUE AND COMPLEX WORDS OR PHRASES.** Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

### For the Young People in Your Household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online.

Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

### Keeping the Electric Grid and Your Data Secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Prairie Land Electric, reliability means repairing wear and tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and proven practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the state in protecting our infrastructure. We learn from each other to keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or



**CO-OPS GROW**  
*Communities*

**Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month in October.**

**As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.**

predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



*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




**POWER**  
*to make life better*

# Prairie Land Welcomes New Employees

**KODY POUNDS** began his career with Prairie Land as director of operations on Aug. 11, 2023. He is relocating to Norton County from Great Bend, where he was the distribution engineering supervisor with Sunflower Electric Power Corporation.

Kody grew up in Glasco and earned his electrical engineering degree from Kansas State University.

Kody and his wife, Staci, have three children. His son, Kaden, is 15, and his daughters, Karly and Kora, are 10 and 8. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and trapping.



Kody Pounds



Jadin Newell

**JADIN NEWELL** started an internship with the Phillipsburg crew on Aug. 28, 2023. He attended line school at Pratt Community College.

Jadin grew up in Damar and graduated from Palco High School. In his spare time, he likes to hunt and fish.

**ELENA LARSON** returned to the Prairie Land family as director of member services on Sept. 1, 2023.

While she was away, she was working as manager of rates and regulatory services with Power Systems Engineering.

Elena earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics from Washburn University and her MBA from Ashford University in Iowa.

Elena and her husband, Randy, relocated from Topeka and now live in Prairie View. The pair has an adult daughter, Anna Rose, and a one-year-old granddaughter, Anastasia.



Elena Larson

## Don't Text and Drive

Would you drive down a football field with your eyes closed?

Texting diverts your attention from driving for about 5 seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field.



*Mirror, Mirror  
on the Wall*

## Is My Bathroom Safe for All?

According to a YouGov survey, 38% of women and 21% of men spend more than 30 minutes each day getting ready.

That's **7.6 DAYS ANNUALLY** spent in the bathroom!

Do not underestimate the potential for electrical hazards in your bathroom. To stay safe while getting ready:

**1** Ensure ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are installed and working properly.

**2** Use all electrical appliances away from the sink, tub, toilet and shower.

**3** Make sure cords and electrical items are in good condition.

**4** Do not extend a cord's reach to use a smartphone (or another device) near the tub or shower.

**5** Do not plug too many cords into an outlet or circuit.

**6** Ensure light fixtures in the shower are covered and exhaust fans are free from lint, dirt and grime.

**7** Make sure your bathroom meets local and National Electrical Code requirements.

SOURCE: [WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.COM](http://WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.COM)



## Cold Weather Accommodation EFFECTIVE NOV. 1 THROUGH MARCH 31

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative wants members to have the electric service needed to keep their homes warm during the winter. Prairie Land also recognizes the customer's responsibility to make arrangements to pay for those services. The Cold Weather Accommodation was designed to ensure both goals are met.

### What Does This Mean for Me?

The Cold Weather Accommodation helps existing members maintain electric service for their homes during the winter. Members must make payment arrangements with Prairie Land.

### How Do I Qualify?

If you can't pay your entire electric bill, call Prairie Land to make payment arrangements: agree to pay 1/12 of the overdue amount of your bill, plus 1/12 of your current bill, all disconnection and connection fees, and agree to pay the remainder in equal payments over the next 11 months; or negotiate a payment plan to pay the overdue amount off sooner than 12 months.

Remember, you must also pay your current monthly bill while paying off the overdue amount. If you are behind

in a previous payment plan and cannot catch up, you need to make a new payment agreement with Prairie Land.

### What Will Prairie Land Do?

Prairie Land will inform you of the Cold Weather Accommodation payment plan as well as other available payment plans. Remember, under the Cold Weather Accommodation, you always have the option of spreading your payments over 12 months.

Prairie Land will send written notice to members 10 days before disconnection, plus attempt a phone or personal contact the day before.

Prairie Land will inform members of agencies offering funds to help pay electric bills.

### Can I Be Disconnected During the Cold Weather Accommodation?

Prairie Land won't disconnect your primary residence when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 35 degrees over the next 24 hours, except in certain circumstances.

To prevent disconnection when it is 35 degrees or above, or to be reconnected regardless of temperature, you

must make pay arrangements with Prairie Land.

Prairie Land may start the final notification and disconnection process if there is a 48-hour forecast of temperatures above 35 degrees.

If the 48-hour forecast changes before the period ends and there is a forecast of below 35 degrees, Prairie Land will not disconnect until there is another Cold Weather Accommodation 48-hour forecast of temperatures above 35 degrees.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Cold Weather Accommodation applies only to existing residential members at their primary residence and is subject to the rules and regulations of the cooperative.



## If You Depend on Life Support, Please Let Us Know

Prairie Land Electric strives to maintain the best possible service with minimum outages. However, outages do occur. We request the name and address of any cooperative member who depends on life support equipment.

We keep a register of members on life support equipment, and it is important this information be current and accurate. We will make every effort to give priority service restoration to members on life support systems. However, Prairie Land advises that it is imperative for the member to have an alternate plan, such as a standby generator or a family/friend's house to stay during outages.

If you or a family member depend on life support equipment, please contact our office at 800-577-3323 or 785-877-3323 to request a form to complete. Forms are also available at [www.prairielandelectric.com](http://www.prairielandelectric.com).

## Stop Energy Vampires

Take steps to stop energy vampires from sucking money out of your wallet.

**WHEN POSSIBLE, UNPLUG ELECTRONICS NOT IN USE.** Plug electronics into a power strip and turn the power strip off when items are not in use.

**PURCHASE SMART POWER STRIPS FOR YOUR COMPUTERS AND TELEVISIONS.** These devices sense when the computer or television is sleeping or off. The smart strip cuts off power to related electronics.

**BUY LOW-STANDBY PRODUCTS.** Most Energy Star-endorsed products draw smaller than average amounts of electricity when turned off.