



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
- 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*

## Residential Solar Considerations

Energy use generated by residential solar panel systems grew by 34% from 2.9 gigawatts (GW) in 2020 to 3.9 GW in 2021, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (In case you are wondering, there are 1 billion watts in one GW. Also, 3.125 million photovoltaic (solar) panels are equivalent to 1 GW of power, according to the EIA.)

U.S. homeowners surveyed by the Pew Research Center in January 2022 demonstrated a strong interest in installing residential solar panels for their homes, with 8% stating they had already done so and 39% stating they had given it serious thought. Anyone seriously considering a residential solar panel system should do their homework first, as it is a big investment.

### Benefits of Home Solar

According to [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov), the

potential benefits of having a residential solar panel system include:

- ▶ Cost savings on energy bills.
- ▶ Increased home value.
- ▶ Reduction of carbon dioxide, water consumption, greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

The benefits of solar can vary drastically based on:

- ▶ Electricity consumption.
- ▶ Solar energy system type and size.
- ▶ Whether a system is purchased or leased.
- ▶ Direct hours of daily sunlight.
- ▶ Size and angle of the roof.
- ▶ Local electricity rates.



Kirk Girard

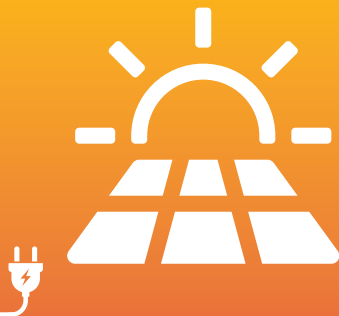
### Drawbacks of Solar

The major drawback of home solar panel systems is the upfront costs.

**Continued on page 12C ▶**

## SAFETY TIP

If you are considering a home solar array, contact your local electric utility early in the process. Your utility will work with installers to ensure proper and safe connection to the power grid.



SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

# Prairie Land Sends Students to Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

**LAYTON JOHNSON**, Phillipsburg, and **ERIN SCHMITT**, Beloit, attended the 46th Annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) from July 14-20, 2023. The leadership camp was held near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and hosted 43 student leaders from Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Wyoming, sponsored by 25 participating cooperatives.

Johnson and Schmitt were selected by Prairie Land based on the leadership skills, academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and character demonstrated in their application, which was comprised of both written submissions and an interview.

This year, Prairie Land was proud to have a winner from last year, **SOPHIE IMM**, Phillipsburg, returning as a camp ambassador.

During the camp, Johnson and Schmitt learned how an electric cooperative is organized and operated by developing a model cooperative with their fellow students, empowering the campers to elect a board of directors, appoint a general manager, establish committees, and attend daily

membership meetings. Camp participants also attended educational seminars on leadership, online reputation management, conflict management, and co-op careers, in addition to presentations on high voltage electricity, raptors and avian protection with HawkQuest, and tours of the Craig Power Station and the Yampa Valley Electric community solar array.

Along with its professional development programs, CYLC included a visit to Mount Werner and downtown Steamboat Springs, whitewater rafting on the Colorado River, and other fun activities such as a volleyball tournament, swimming, talent show and a dance.

"Something that impacted me the most is the family aspect throughout camp," Johnson said. "Everyone made me feel included. I want to take this back to my own leadership activities."



From left: Sophie Imm, 2022 winner and 2023 ambassador, poses with 2023 winners Layton Johnson, Phillipsburg, and Erin Schmitt, Beloit.

"I wish I knew how much work was put in by our co-ops to get us to this camp," Schmitt said. "This camp is not about the 'now' but instead about the future. It's about preparing the next generation to take over and make the world a better place. In order to do that, we need leaders to guide us to success."

"Prairie Land is proud to continue our sponsorship of our co-op's student leaders at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp," CEO Kirk Girard said. "It is an honor to help provide students opportunities to grow in their leadership potential and develop the knowledge to further engage in our cooperative community."

Prairie Land sponsors the trip for two students each year. For more information on how to attend/send students to camp, contact Kenzie Griffiths in member services at 800-577-3323.



During Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, students learned about raptor and avian protection. Here Sophie Imm (third from right) and her fellow ambassadors pose with a bald eagle used in the demonstration.





Our offices will be closed on  
Monday, Sept. 4, 2023, to  
observe Labor Day.  
Please call 800-577-3323 if  
you have an outage.

## Residential Solar Considerations *Continued from page 12A* ▶

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the average cost of installing a residential rooftop solar array is \$19,000. Additionally, every time your roof needs to be replaced, the solar array must be removed, reinstalled and often repaired, adding to the costs of both your solar panel system and roofing projects.

However, since the lifetime of a solar panel array and a roof are both roughly 25–30 years, [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov) recommends individuals consider replacing their roofs at the same time they install the solar panel array to avoid staggered reinstallation and repair costs. For example, the NREL estimates that when installing a roof and a solar array together, it costs approximately \$25,000 as opposed to \$30,000 when installed separately (the price varies depending on the size of the home and other factors).

### Involve Your Electric Co-op Early On

If you are considering a solar system, let your electric co-op know, since most residential systems are tied to the power grid. The co-op will be able to provide information about connection requirements and fees, reliable contractors, relevant policies, accurate rates and other resources.

### Are There Tax Breaks/Incentives?

There is a federal tax break available to those who qualify. The federal residential solar energy credit is a

dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of income tax otherwise owed. For example, claiming a \$1,000 federal tax credit reduces federal income taxes by \$1,000.

The residential tax credit can be claimed on federal income taxes for a percentage of the cost of a home solar panel system paid for by the taxpayer (e.g., a 30% tax credit). The best way to find incentives is to visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency website at [www.DSIREUSA.org](http://www.DSIREUSA.org).

### Do Your Homework

In addition to contacting your electric cooperative, do the following:

- ▶ Review energy bills for the past 12 to 24 months to calculate the average monthly kilowatt usage.
- ▶ Assess the age, size and condition of your roof, as well as available ground space. This will help determine the best location for solar panel arrays.
- ▶ Hire qualified installers who are trained and certified to install solar, among other factors.
- ▶ Get several quotes from multiple installers and ensure that all costs are factored into the quotes, including equipment, permitting, installation and inspection fees.

Going solar is a great way to harness energy from the sun; however, assess where it would be located, the size of the array required and the costs versus savings before considering having a home solar array installed.

# 5 Factors to Consider Before INSTALLING HOME SOLAR

### Find out your home's energy use.

Look at your energy bill(s) to review kWh usage for the past 12–24 months and calculate the average monthly usage.

### Contact your electric utility.

Because most residential systems are tied to the power grid, reach out about connection requirements, fees and possible incentives.

### Location, location, location.

Start considering panel location. Assess the age, size and condition of your roof as well as available ground space.

### Get several quotes.

There are costs other than equipment, such as permitting, installation and inspection. Make sure all costs are included in quotes.

### Do your homework.

Ensure the company you are considering has installers who are specially trained and certified to install solar, among other factors.

To learn more, visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov) and search for “Homeowner’s Guide to Going Solar.” Use the drop-down titled “How Much Power Can I Generate with Solar?” for information on PVWatts, a solar energy production and cost estimator.

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/ad-3027-usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) **MAIL:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) **FAX:** (202) 690-7442; or

(3) **EMAIL:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## What is COMMUNITY SOLAR?

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), community solar is any solar project or purchasing program that allows multiple people to benefit from solar energy use. Community solar participants could be individuals, businesses, nonprofits or other groups within a specified geographic area. Typically, the solar panels are located off-site.

Community solar enrollees either buy or lease a portion of the solar panels in the array, and they typically receive an electric bill credit for electricity generated by their share of the community solar system. This bill-credit model works similarly for individuals or businesses who own an on-site solar array.

Although a less common practice, the term community solar can also be used to define an array in which occupants of multi-unit buildings benefit from the collective solar energy harnessed on-site.

Community programs allow everyone to benefit from solar energy, according to the DOE, even if they cannot or choose not to install their own solar array.



### COMING SOON!

### BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

## POWER

*to make life better*

### CO-OP MONTH GIVEAWAY



Enter online to win prizes or bill credits beginning Sept. 25 at 8 a.m. Entry forms will be included in your October issue of *Kansas Country Living* or can be picked up at your nearest Prairie Land Electric office.