



1938

CHARTER SIGNED

On October 13, a Kansas charter was signed by 20 persons to create the Norton-Decatur Cooperative Electric Company, Inc. as the first co-op in Western Kansas. 147 people had paid \$5 and signed a membership list. The first board meeting was on November 7.



1939

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

There were 39 members present at the first annual meeting held at the Norcatour City Hall on February 14. In May, the first REA loan of \$88,000 was granted, and an office in the Broquet Building in Norton was leased for \$13/month as the first headquarters. Locals were hired to dig holes and set poles.



1940

FIRST CONSUMERS CONNECTED

On October 1, the first members were hooked up and using electricity. Power was purchased from the City of Norton. Construction continued along Prairie Dog Creek from Calvert to near Jennings, then across the divide to Allison and east along the North Solomon River to New Almelo. Four months later, 132 members were connected. However, wartime material shortages made further construction nearly impossible.



1945-6

FIRST MANAGER HIRED

Articles of Conversion were adopted under the Electric Cooperative Act, on April 14, 1945, changing the cooperative to a nonprofit membership corporation and thus being granted exemption from federal income tax under Section 501C-12 of the Internal Revenue Code. On October 1, 1946, D.R. Ellermeier was hired as manager, and by the end of the year, the Corporation had grown to 361 consumers and 130 miles of line. This ushered in a period of heavy construction the following year.



1957

BLIZZARD - SUNFLOWER

On March 1, a devastating blizzard damaged most of the system's 3075 miles of line. Nearly all of the more than 4000 consumers lost power, and major highways were closed for days. That same year, Norton-Decatur was one of six rural electric cooperatives in western Kansas that organized a generation and transmission cooperative (Sunflower Electric Power Corporation). As of 2021, Sunflower is the sole provider of electric power to Prairie Land Electric.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Made possible by the Rural Electrification Act passed by Congress and signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in May of 1936.



1996

MERGER

In April 1996, the memberships of both the Norton-Decatur Electric Cooperative and the Northwest Kansas Electric Cooperative Association voted overwhelmingly to merge the two cooperatives. The merger became effective 1-1-97. Work began to incorporate the two companies into one, standardize board and personnel policies and find a new name for the company: Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.



2007

AQUILA ACQUISITION

As an example of cooperation among cooperatives, six neighboring electric cooperatives in western Kansas created the Mid-Kansas Electric Company and successfully purchased the West Plains electric system owned by Aquila, Inc., an investor-owned utility. This purchase, effective April 1, added 15,084 meters in 67 towns to Prairie Land's cooperative family.



2021

NEW MISSION

In 2021, Prairie Land embarked on an important journey to update the way business would be done. Employees were surveyed and a steering committee was formed to write a new mission statement, create a tag line, and define the core values of the cooperative.

POWER
to make life better