

**ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

Rolling Hills Electric Co-op, Inc.

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Rolling Hills Honors Hooley Alcorn

Rolling Hills Electric was a part of the 43rd Jewell County Historical Society **THRESHING BEE AND ANTIQUE TRACTOR SHOW FESTIVAL** on July 17, 2021, held in Mankato City Park. This celebration allows people of all ages to catch a glimpse of “how things were done” in years past on Kansas farms and maybe even get some “hands-on” experience.

This year’s honoree was **DOYLE “HOOLEY” ALCORN**, who worked for the Jewell-Mitchell Rural Electric Co-op for more than 40 years. Rolling Hills operations manager, Marc Martin, and member services,

Marc Martin, operations manager, introduces and honors Doyle “Hooley” Alcorn in front of the large crowd during the Threshing Bee safety demonstration.

Catie Mellies, interviewed Hooley prior to this celebration at his home. As the pair listened to his stories and memories from his years working for Jewell-Mitchell Co-op, it became apparent how proud and passionate he was for his line of work, community and country.

Hooley started working for the electric cooperative in 1944, went into the Army for three years, then back to Jewell

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Kaitlyn Nick

Welcome New Hire Kaitlyn Nick

If you have called into our office lately, you may have noticed a new voice on the other end to assist you! **KAITLYN NICK** joined the Rolling Hills Electric family at the beginning of August taking on the customer service/accounting assistant position.

Kaitlyn grew up in Beloit and graduated from Beloit High School. She earned an associate’s degree in healthcare management from Oklahoma State University and is currently working toward a bachelor’s degree in business administration for human resources at Fort Hays State University.

She has two daughters, Annabella and Daniella, as well as two dogs, Luna (Border Collie/Huskie) and Laine (Pomapoo). In her spare time, she enjoys spending time on Waconda lake, fishing and being outdoors when time allows. Welcome to the cooperative family, Kaitlyn!

2021

Continuation of the 2021 Annual Meeting

The continuation of the 2021 Annual Meeting of Rolling Hills Electric was held on Aug. 26, 2021, at our Beloit facility in the shop area. The annual meeting business took place back on April 9, 2021, but was restricted to board of trustees and key staff only due to COVID-19 concerns and gathering restrictions. It was decided by our board to host the full event once restrictions eased allowing consumer-members, board of trustees and employees to finally be able to safely gather together for an evening of fellowship.

The evening kicked off as consumer-members began to arrive and were registered to get their prize ticket and receive their member gift, which was a Rolling Hills logoed insulated cooler bag. A delicious meal was catered by Buffalo Roam Steak House out of Mankato. Brisket, barbecue chicken, vegetables, salads, fresh cantaloupe, rolls and cookies were served with the help of our board of trustees. The shop area was open and large



enough to seat everyone comfortably while also allowing for proper distancing, if desired, during the meal and hand sanitizer and masks were readily available as well.

The business portion of the evening was kept “short and sweet” due to the extreme heat. No voting took place as that was completed at the April 9, 2021 meeting. General Manager Doug





1. The Rolling Hills Board of Trustees served the meal to consumer-members.
2. Consumer-members enjoyed a safety demonstration from the operations crew.
3. Board President Michelle Brokes speaks to the membership.
4. Consumer-member Marvin Henning with his prize.
5. Consumer-members Sharlyn Long and Karen Herndon with their prizes.
6. Consumer-members gathered for the continuation of the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Jackson opened the meeting with a welcome, comments and introductions. Catie Mellies, member services, was called to draw for the first half of the prizes, then turned over the meeting to Board President Michelle Brokes to reconvene the 2021 annual meeting. Justin Trost, secretary, was called upon to give the report of quorum and official notice of meeting. Brokes then gave the president's report and introduced the board of trustees to the membership.

Jackson gave an overview of the year and then hosted a question-and-answer session, allowing consumer-members to ask questions. There were some great questions posed from our membership. Mellies drew for the remaining prizes and announced the grand prize winner of a 36" Blackstone grill. The meeting was then adjourned. Consumer-members had the option to stay to enjoy a safety demonstration led by Marc Martin, operations manager.

Annual Meeting Prizes

Congrats to our annual meeting prize winners!

36" Blackstone Grill, from Rolling Hills Electric

NEAL HERNDON

\$100 Bill Credit, from Rolling Hills Electric

MELVIN EFKEN

\$100 Bill Credit, from Rolling Hills Electric

ROGER BOYD

\$100 Bill Credit, from Rolling Hills Electric

LANNIN ZOLTENKO

\$50 Bill Credit, from KEPCo

GERALD LINK

\$50 Bill Credit, from KEPCo

MARK NOVAK

\$50 Bill Credit, from KEPCo

WENDELL DEBEY

\$50 Bill Credit, from KEPCo

NORMA JOHNSON

\$50 Bill Credit, from KSI Engineering

MARLENE GRITTMAN

\$50 Bill Credit, from KSI Engineering

LEO BROWN

100 foot Garden Hose, from Rolling Hills Electric

JERRY DEAN

Air Fryer, from KEPCo

TODD JEFFERY

DeWALT Ratchet Straps, from Rolling Hills Electric

ROY DEBEY

DeWALT Shop Vac, 6 Gal, from Rolling Hills Electric

CHARLES JORDAN

Ninja Blender, from Border States

MARVIN HENNING

Smokeless Grill, from Border States

PHILLIP ESSLINGER

Zero Gravity Chair & Table Set, from Rolling Hills Electric

SHARLYN LONG

Rolling Hills Honors Hooley Alcorn

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Mitchell for another 40 years before he retired from the co-op.

Hooley talked about how different times were back then compared to now, hand digging holes with “banjos” and “spoons” (long-handled shovels with a round spoon-like shovelhead at the end to scoop dirt) for pole placement, not having bucket trucks, and when a lineman left for an outage they took their radio (if they were lucky and had one) and hoped you came back!

One of his many stories included how they used to unload power poles off the railroad cars with dynamite — he said there was no OSHA in those days. One of the most memorable poles he spoke about was when they set a 100-foot antenna pole on the hill right outside of Mankato, to the west (which is still there!). It came in on a railcar with a turntable in the middle. To haul it, they had a truck on each end of it (the truck on the end was hauled backward) with a trailer in the middle for support. He said one of the best days of his life is when that pole was put up and done!

Hooley spoke of how dangerous the work was and recalled when a lineman he was working with had been electrocuted. He performed CPR on him, however, the gentleman sadly passed away a couple of days later succumbing to his injuries. They held safety meetings, just like we do today, where the linemen practiced bringing each other down the pole in case of electrocution (pole top rescues).

The “on-call phone” was kept in their house. It had an outside bell so if the phone rang while he was outside he would be alerted. When asked about the worst storm he had been through, Hooley replied it was in the Osborne area, dealing with mud and they were just setting poles right on



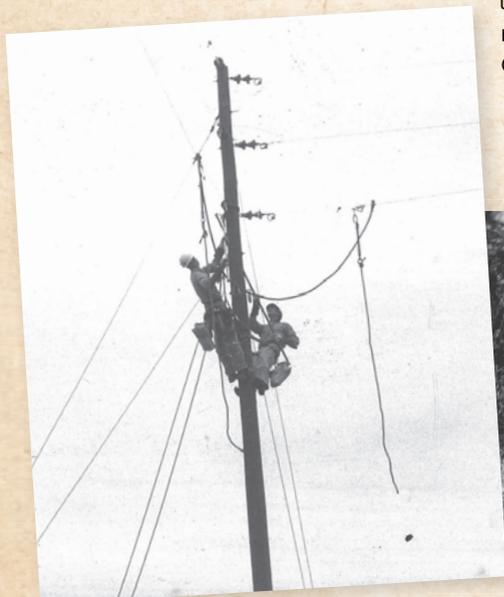
Current linemen for Rolling Hills Electric (from left in tan), Casey Smith, Adam Badger, Trent Webb and Marc Martin pose with former linemen from Jewell-Mitchell Co-op, Gerald “Mac” McAtee (center) and Doyle “Hooley” Alcorn (seated).

the edge of roads. Later during the summer, contractors came through to reset them. It took approximately one month to restore power and most of the linemen stayed in Osborne because it was so far away. He spoke of another time where his late wife was home still getting outage calls and she was so scared because he hadn't come home and no one could find him. A fellow lineman finally found him stuck in the mud. He said radios were not around until around the mid-1950s when they set their first radio antenna.

The interview ended with a tour through his office — or his museum as his family calls it. It was filled to the brim with memorabilia from years of dedication to his community and country. Pictures, plaques and miscellaneous items littered the walls and shelves, there was not an empty place left. There was World War II memorabilia, many memories and objects from his 24 years of being county commissioner after he retired from the co-op, old collectible tractors, and his most cherished piece — his hard hat and climbers that were hung proudly on the wall. When asked what three things Hooley enjoyed most in his life, he replied World War II, baseball and the REA.

FUN FACT: Hooley hired Craig Clark, a current journeyman lineman for Rolling Hills Electric!

We were so honored to be able to sit down with Hooley for an afternoon, comparing stories and listening to how far rural electrification has come from when he started as a lineman in 1942. We thank Hooley for his service in our armed forces and for his dedication and passion for keeping our lights on.



Far left: Doyle “Hooley” Alcorn performing linework repair.

Left: Hooley in front of his REA truck in 1947.