

**ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

February Polar Vortex Weather Event Update

As promised in the communication sent to our members last month, Rolling Hills Electric has obtained new information regarding the February polar vortex weather event. Although the total cost impact is still unknown, and likely won't be known for a number of months, a plan has been set in place by our power supplier, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (KEPCo), to amortize the costs attributable to the weather event over a 24-month period. The below information will hopefully help explain and answer some questions that our members may have.

How long will it take to know the final costs from the February polar vortex event?

- ▶ The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) requested and received an extension from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to resolve and finalize the cost impacts.
- ▶ At this time, the final SPP review, settlement, and billing will not occur until approximately late fall. Even then, with state and federal regulatory agencies and lawmakers involved, the process could take longer to determine final, attributable costs.

Who is KEPCo (Rolling Hills Electric power supplier)?

- ▶ Rolling Hills Electric is a distribution electric cooperative, meaning we do

not produce electricity but we distribute electricity that comes from our power supplier.

- ▶ Rolling Hills Electric's power supplier is KEPCo (Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.).
- ▶ KEPCo is composed of 16 electric cooperatives in the state of Kansas.
- ▶ Rolling Hills Electric has a very active role in KEPCo: **DOUG JACKSON**, Rolling Hills General Manager, serves as KEPCo's Board President. **PAUL WILSON**, Rolling Hills Board Trustee, serves on the KEPCo Board of Trustees.



Doug Jackson

What are the advantages of Rolling Hills Electric being a member of KEPCo during this weather event?

As a member of KEPCo, their decision to amortize cost impacts from the polar vortex demonstrates the value of nearly all seven of the cooperative principles. Being self-governed, focused on community, economically responsible, and cooperating among our cooperative members to do the best we can to provide safe, economical, reliable power are valuable benefits of the cooperative model and never more so than now!

- ▶ KEPCo believes their members were

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more protected from market conditions than other utilities during the February weather event.

- ▶ Although no utility was completely protected, Rolling Hills' relationship with KEPCo provided owned resources and capacity contracts that covered the vast majority of our energy needs.
- ▶ February energy costs paid by KEPCo for Rolling Hills Electric's usage in February were nearly twice the budgeted billing for February, compared to other utilities in Kansas whose costs were much higher (6–12 times higher).
- ▶ Due to KEPCo's cash position and access to low-cost financing, they can assist their member cooperatives by mitigating the cost of the extreme weather event over a 24-month period.

How will the February polar vortex costs continue to impact my future electric bills from Rolling Hills Electric?

In times of a crisis, such as the February polar vortex event we all experienced, the benefits of being a member of Rolling Hills Electric as well as a member of our power supplier, KEPCo, shows how valuable and fortunate we are for being a member of a cooperative who has protected our members from much of the price increases on energy.

- ▶ The good news is that KEPCo, our power supplier, believes that Rolling Hills Electric had limited exposure to the market during the February polar vortex event.
- ▶ The cost impact as of today to KEPCo, who supplies energy to nearly 300,000 Kansas members, is nearly twice the February budgeted expense for energy.

- ▶ The amount collected by KEPCo capping the power cost adjustment (PCA) was nearly 30% of the amortized value, leaving a current balance of approximately 70% of the amortized value yet to be collected.
- ▶ Realizing that there will be time before all of this will be settled, the KEPCo board elected to amortize the remaining 70% yet to be collected, plus any settlements, over the next 24 months.
- ▶ Amortizing the costs over a 24-month period will help mitigate the impact to the nearly 300,000 rural Kansans KEPCo's member cooperatives serve.
- ▶ No interest will be accrued throughout the 24-month amortization period.

What does this mean to Rolling Hills members?

- ▶ KEPCo's remaining amortized value from the February weather event is yet to be collected. This equates to approximately 70% of the cost impact through March 31.
- ▶ KEPCo will amortize 1/24 of this value for the usage incurred in March and billed in April.
- ▶ Because usage values for March are not finalized as of the time of this article, the estimated factor that this value produced for the nearly 300,000 KEPCo members is approximately \$0.00193 per kilowatt-hour.
 - ▶ For example, for an average residential Rolling Hills member using 1,000 kWh per billing cycle, the additional cost added to the PCA would have a less than \$2 impact on the PCA billing line for the month of March.
- ▶ As additional costs are incurred or credits are applied, the amortization will be adjusted with plans to fully recover all the costs over the next 24 months.

What happens next?

- ▶ Many regulatory agencies have opened investigations into the polar vortex event and resulting cost impacts.
 - ▶ These entities include FERC, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), Congress, the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), and the Kansas Legislature, which has not only been inquiring but has already passed or is considering expedited legislation to assist utilities and customers across the state with the cost impacts of the weather event.
- ▶ Rolling Hills Electric will keep our members advised once we learn of the full impact from this event and will communicate to our membership.

Once again, we thank you, our members, for your understanding and patience during these unprecedented times. As always, please contact our office at 785-534-1601 if you have any questions. Thank you!

LIEAP Expanded & Extended in Response to Winter Storm Uri

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) has expanded eligibility in response to winter storm Uri. Applicants making up to 150% of the federal poverty level are now eligible for LIEAP payments. That equates to \$39,300 for a family of four. Previously, the threshold was 130% of the poverty level.

For anyone who applied previously but was denied is eligible for assistance, if they now qualify under the expanded thresholds and other criteria.

The application deadline has also been extended through May 28. Applications must be received at the local DCF office prior to **5 P.M., MAY 28, 2021**.

Rolling Hills Welcomes New Team Member



Cody Bacon

CODY BACON joined the Rolling Hills Electric family the beginning of April taking on the electrician position. He comes to us from 24/7 Triplett Inc. in Salina where he worked for the past four years.

He grew up in Ada, Kansas, and went to school in Tescott. He graduated from Salina Vo-Tech with an electrical degree.

Cody and his wife, Kaylene, reside south of Minneapolis. They have four kids: two daughters, Mallorie and Rylan, and two sons, Cordell and Canter. He enjoys the outdoors, hunting, fishing, riding horses, and water sports. He also enjoys tinkering with wood or metal projects. Welcome to the Rolling Hills family Cody!

Cooperative Staff Participate in CPR Training

Rolling Hills staff recently attended CPR Training at the Mitchell County EMS building for CPR recertification.

Employees are recertified every two years. Electrical lineworkers are required by OSHA to receive certain types of safety training. There is a good reason for that requirement since electrical line work is among the most dangerous professions.



2021

Rolling Hills Trustees Elected

The board election process for 2021 was completed on April 9 during the annual meeting at the Beloit office. The tally committee consisted of Shirley Becker, Tanya Buser, Heather Cashatt and Adrien Reed, overseen by John Sherman, attorney.

Those elected to the Rolling Hills Electric board for a three-year term effective April 9, 2021, are **SARAH GOSS**, Kanopolis, representing District 1, Position 3; **PAUL WILSON**, Burr Oak, representing District 2, Position 3; and **JUSTIN TROST**, Concordia, representing District 3, Position 3.

Rolling Hills Electric appreciates the time and energy that each of the board members devotes on behalf of all members.



Sarah Goss



Justin Trost



Paul Wilson

REMEMBER AND HONOR

MEMORIAL DAY

— ★ ★ ★ —

Our office will be closed Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day. There will be staff on call 24/7 to take care of any issues or outages.

2021 Youth Leadership Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2021 Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **HANNAH ANDRINGA**, **NICOLE HAASE** and **RYLAN REEVES**.

Rolling Hills Electric's scholarship program provided three scholarships, totaling \$5,000 to high school seniors whose parents are members and reside on Rolling Hills Electric's line. Winners were selected based upon application data, a written essay, and scores on an open-book electric cooperative exam.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2021 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, have been canceled. In response, the Rolling Hills Electric Board of Trustees approved two \$2,000 scholarships along with the opportunity to attend the Kansas Electric Youth Leadership Conference to be held virtually this summer for the first and second place applicants, and approved one \$1,000 scholarship for the third-place applicant.

What a great group of young people we have representing Rolling Hills! We wish them much success as they enter their senior year in high



Hannah Andringa



Nicole Haase



Rylan Reeves

school and soon begin their college education.

HANNAH ANDRINGA is the daughter of John and Tracy Andringa of Ellsworth. Hannah attends Ellsworth Jr./Sr. High School and plans to study econ or pre law at Kansas State University.

NICOLE HAASE is the daughter of Arrin and Kristin Haase of Ellsworth. Nicole attends Ellsworth Jr./Sr. High School and plans to study animal science at Kansas State University.

RYLAN REEVES is the daughter of Crecia Reeves (mother) and Greg Carey (stepfather) of Russell and Scott Reeves (father) of Sylvan Grove. Rylan attends Russell High School and plans to study agribusiness at Fort Hays State University.

UNDERSTAND BASIC ESSENTIALS OF ELECTRICAL SAFETY

One of the most important things you can do in your home is to make sure the electrical system meets basic safety requirements.

By doing so, not only are you checking the condition of your home's electrical system, but you're also ensuring the safety of your loved ones.



Basic Home Electrical Safety Essentials

- ▶ Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard.
- ▶ Ensure ground fault circuit interrupters are installed near water supplies and outdoors.
- ▶ Use extension cords **ONLY** on a temporary basis.
- ▶ Match lightbulb wattage to fixture requirements.
- ▶ Do not overload your home's service capacity. A qualified electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

Signs of Electrical Wiring Problems

- ▶ Dim or flickering lights
- ▶ Burning smell, smoke, shocks or discoloration when using an electrical outlet or switch
- ▶ Frayed wires
- ▶ Breakers that trip
- ▶ Rodent damage

When Do I Get an Electrical Home Inspection? If Your Last Inspection Was:

- ▶ **More than 40 years ago** — an inspection is overdue.
- ▶ **10-40 years ago** — an inspection is recommended, especially if your electrical demands have increased or you've noticed warning signs of an electrical problem.
- ▶ **Less than 10 years ago** — an inspection isn't essential unless you've noticed warning signs of an electrical problem.