



## ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

### Rolling Hills Electric Co-op, Inc.

#### Board of Trustees

**Bob Fredrickson**, President  
Ellsworth – District 1

**Paul Wilson**, Vice-President  
Burr Oak – District 2

**Justin Trost**, Secretary  
Concordia – District 3

**John George**, Treasurer  
Lebanon – District 2

**Eric Andersen**, Trustee  
Jamestown – District 3

**Michelle Brokes**, Trustee  
Wilson – District 1

**Mike Brzon**, Trustee  
Courtland – District 3

**Corey Dlabal**, Trustee  
Wilson – District 1

**Larry Kendig**, Trustee  
Osborne – District 2

**Tom Marr**, Trustee  
Formoso – District 2

#### Staff

**Douglas Jackson** General Manager

#### Contact Us

3075B U.S. Hwy. 24 P.O. Box 339  
Beloit, KS 67420  
785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572

#### Like us on Facebook

On Facebook, search for “Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.” and like our page for continued updates, energy efficiency tips, cooperative news and outage updates.



### FROM THE MANAGER

## We Love Our Communities

“To move forward, you have to give back.” This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation that ties Rolling Hills Electric to the communities we serve. With Valentine’s Day approaching, we can’t think of a better time to express how much we love these communities and serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped bring electricity to rural Kansas many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. Most recently, we asked for your help in convincing our elected officials in Washington, D.C., to pass the RURAL Act. Because of these grassroots efforts, the bill was signed into law protecting more than 900 electric co-ops throughout the nation from losing their tax-exempt status. We want to continue to help meet the long-term needs of our communities to ensure they continue to thrive — because just like you, we live here too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the consumer-members (that’s you!) we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Rolling Hills Electric

knows electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our communities, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean programs for Kansas’ youth, such as education scholarships, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community’s brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action, or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, where students learn about the cooperative structure while gathering leadership lessons.

Over the last seven decades, we have supported our community-focused activities and organizations — and we couldn’t do any of this without you, our members. We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the cooperative through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs and activities.

As a local business, we are proud to

**Continued on page 16B ▶**



**Doug Jackson**

## We Love Our Communities

Continued from page 16A ►

power your life and bring good things to our communities. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain we can continue to do good things for our communities.

### Keep Your Furry Friends Safe Around Electricity

Electrical cords are a primary electric danger for pets as they love to chew on them or bat them around with their paws. If you can't keep cords hidden behind appliances or furniture, pet-proof them with cord covers or inexpensive split loom tubing found at home improvement stores or online. Provide teething or play alternatives and consider using special products that deter chewing, like bitter no chew sprays.

Watch your pet around dangling or sagging cords, including phone or tablet charging cables. Unplug charging cables once your devices are charged. Consider charging phones before you go to bed so cords are put away while you sleep. Not only do they draw a small amount of energy when not in use, but the dangling cords are just crying to be played with.

Watch where you place lamps and other plugged-in items. Lamps can be a fire hazard if they are knocked over, especially if they have halogen bulbs. Cats love to curl up near or behind warm computers so create another warm, inviting space for them next to a radiator or in the rays of a sunlit window.

Do not leave your pet alone around items that get hot: curling irons and straighteners, an outdoor grill, a portable heater and other electric appliances, including cooktops.

## Trustee Election Ballots Talled



Corey Dlabal



David Dubbert



Tom Marr



C. Eric Anderson

The board election process for 2020 was completed on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, at the Beloit headquarters. The tally committee consisted of Shirley Becker, Tanya Buser, Linnea Beebe and John Sherman, attorney.

Elected to the Rolling Hills Electric board for a three-year term effective Jan. 1, 2020, are:

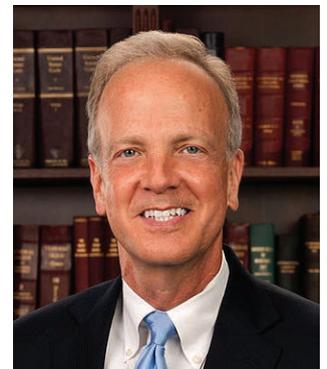
- **COREY DLBAL**, Wilson, representing Ellsworth District 1 – Position 1
- **DAVID DUBBERT**, Beloit, representing Mankato District 2 – Position 1
- **TOM MARR**, Formoso, representing Mankato District 2 – Position 4
- **C. ERIC ANDERSEN**, Jamestown, representing Belleville District 3 – Position 1

Rolling Hills Electric welcomes David Dubbert to the board, filling the position vacated by Larry Kendig. We appreciate the time and energy that each board member devotes on behalf of all members.

## Rolling Hills Hosts Senator Moran's Town Hall

**SENATOR JERRY MORAN** addressed a group of 40 at the office of Rolling Hills Electric, Beloit, the afternoon of Friday, Dec. 20. He visited about his high regard for our veterans, their health care services and the benefits they deserve for defending our country. He touched base on a few things happening or not happening in Washington, D.C.

Senator Moran was thanked for the long-awaited signing of the RURAL Act protecting the non-profit status of cooperatives. He then welcomed questions and concerns from those in attendance. Rolling Hills Electric was honored to have Senator Moran visit the cooperative.



Senator Jerry Moran

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the dampener when a fire is not burning.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



# Make Plans to Attend Rolling Hills Electric Annual Meeting

## Rolling Hills Annual Meeting is Friday, April 17, 2020

Over the past several months, your trustees have been diligently reviewing the cooperative bylaws and are ready to submit fully restated bylaws to the members for their consideration. The proposed restated bylaws are intended to more closely conform to bylaw recommendations made by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Bylaws are the cooperative's major governing document and they establish rules for governing the cooperative and rights and obligations of both the members and the cooperative. They are a binding contract providing protections for the cooperative and you the member. The bylaws provide you the members with a voice in governing now and in the future.

Our current bylaws were last updated in 2002 and were drafted from a bylaw model in existence in the 1950s. A lot has changed since 2002 and most definitely since 1950. Even though the basic principles contained in the bylaws are the same, the format has changed and our language has expanded.

A few of the most notable changes are: a definition section, deletion of language concerning the 2002 consolidation, changing the method of nominating trustees, and changes allowing for the election of trustees at the annual meeting, with the use of mail ballots. The definition section will assist members in understanding the use of a word or acronym contained in the bylaws.

Deletion of language concerning the 2002 consolidation is appropriate as the language is no longer pertinent to the

operation of the cooperative.

Changing the method of nominating trustees addresses governance topics many cooperatives throughout the United States are undertaking. The Rolling Hills board is proposing moving to a petition method for nominating trustees. Any member who meets the qualifications outlined in the bylaws and lives within the district open for election, can be nominated by collecting signatures from 20 members living within their district.

This change removes the perception of the board controlling the nomination process. Many cooperatives are moving to this process for the nomination of trustees.

Changing the election of trustees so that the elections occur at the annual meeting. Electing trustees at an annual meeting has been the more typical election process for cooperatives, and the use of mail ballots in the process will assure the right of all members to vote in the trustee election whether or not they attend the annual meeting.

The trustees are recommending that you, the members, approve the adoption of the restated bylaws.

Once complete, the proposed restated bylaws will be posted on the cooperative website for your review or you may request a hard copy from the office.

Voting on the proposed bylaws will be by mail ballot or you may cast your vote at the annual meeting if you have not previously voted by mail.

Make plans to attend your cooperative's annual meeting.



## Mark Your Calendars

### Annual Meeting is April 17, 2020

The Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, April 17, 2020, at the Beloit headquarters. Watch Facebook, the *Kansas Country Living* magazine and the website for more details. Consumer-members should be continually educated on the issues concerning their local electric utility. You can obtain this education by reading *Kansas Country Living* magazine and attending the Rolling Hills Annual Meeting.

April 2020						
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26	27	28	29	30		

# Jiricek Retires After Nearly 42 Years

The Ellsworth District will be missing one of its longtime employees with the retirement of Journeyman Lineman **JIM JIRICEK**. Jiricek began his long career with Smoky Hill Electric, now Rolling Hills Electric, on April 3, 1978. Jiricek is one of those guys who always came in with a smile, kind words and a positive attitude. He could make us laugh without even trying.

Growing up in Ellsworth, during high school, Jiricek worked for B&D Service as an apprentice electrician. Following high school, Jiricek pursued the electrical program at North Central Kansas Technical College in Beloit.

Plans for retirement include traveling with his wife, Dusty, and visiting daughters, Renee, Candice and Sandy. Jiricek and Dusty have 12 grandchildren

they will get to spend more quality time with. In addition to traveling, Jiricek may consider a part-time job taking him all over the lower 48 states. Jiricek's hobbies are trail riding and woodworking.

A retirement recognition and luncheon were held in Jiricek's honor on Jan. 3, his last day on the job. Manager Doug Jackson congratulated and thanked Jiricek for his many years of service and dedication to the cooperative. As a token of appreciation from Rolling Hills, Manager Jackson then presented to Jiricek a meter lamp.

Following the luncheon, Jiricek shared some of his cherished memories and some nightmare experiences. The cherished or good memories are of the consumer-members he has come

to know, the cooperative employees, and the satisfaction of keeping the lights on. Top on his ugly memory list would be getting stuck in the mud many times and a very cold stay in a motel during a storm restoration.

Employees had the opportunity to share funny or memorable experiences working with Jiricek, bringing out laughter by all.



**Manager Doug Jackson congratulated and thanked Jim Jiricek for almost 42 years of service with Smoky Hill Electric and Rolling Hills Electric.**

The greatest change Jiricek said he has observed during his tenure is the consolidation of Smoky Hill, Jewell-Mitchel and NCK electric cooperatives in January 2002. Technology has changed immensely the last five or six years and Jiricek says he sees many more on the horizon.

When asked what advice he has to pass on to the younger generation and new employees, Jiricek said, "Take your time and listen to the more experienced lineman, work between grounds, and do not be afraid to ask questions. Above all, follow the safety rules and don't take short cuts. Be safe!"

On behalf of Rolling Hills Electric, we wish Jim many years of a happy, healthy, safe and relaxing retirement.



**Jim Jiricek was presented with a meter lamp from the cooperative for nearly 42 years of service with Smoky Hill Electric and Rolling Hills Electric.**

## Do Your Part to Keep Lineworkers Safe

Think about how often you have experienced one of these scenarios:

It's nearing 5 p.m. on a workday. Your boss wanted that last-minute report and your children need to be picked up from soccer or play practice. You jump in your car and on the way you approach a work zone. You don't have time to slow down properly so you rush through it, ignoring the orange work zone signs.

You're having a garage sale and you think posting a sign on a utility pole won't hurt. Everyone does it, right? Wrong. Either of these situations could injure or kill one of Rolling Hills Electric's lineworkers.

The job of an electric lineworker is not easy. Lineworkers take great pride in providing safe and reliable service, but their job involves working on and around live power and often in the tough elements of winter and spring storms. We ask you to do your part to keep them safe:

- ▶ Slow down and move over in work zones. Vehicles going too fast endanger workers on the ground. Driving too fast or not moving over can also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in danger by causing the utility vehicle to move or sway.
- ▶ Do not post anything on a utility pole, especially

with staples, nails or tacks. These can puncture insulated gloves or other protective clothing and expose workers to high voltages.

- ▶ Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet. The power that backfeeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker. Contact Rolling Hills Electric to learn how to properly use your generator.
- ▶ Please be patient when the power goes out. Lineworkers restore power as efficiently and as safely as possible.

For questions about employee safety, contact Kristi at 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572.