



ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

We Are Still Working Hard for You



Doug Jackson

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by the coronavirus, I want to assure you that your local electric cooperative is here to help you. We have

always had an emergency plan that has served us well in a variety of circumstances, from ice storms to tornadoes to flash floods. Early in this crisis, our staff updated that plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the reliable electric service you have come to expect from your electric cooperative.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is the No. 1 thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in mind, keeping the power flowing is priority No. 1 for everyone involved in maintaining the electric cooperative system.

That starts with our generation cooperative, Kansas Electric Power Cooperatives, Inc. which has taken extreme measures to ensure its workforce is healthy and its power plants are functioning as needed. It extends to the 27 cooperatives that wheel

that electricity across Kansas, and it includes Rolling Hills Electric where business may be a bit unusual, but our service remains the same.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we have taken in order to keep your power flowing. We've closed our lobbies to prevent the spread of germs. Instead, we are encouraging members to use our drop box, online, phone the office, and the “good ol’” U.S. Postal Service to pay bills.

Many of our employees are working from home. We've divided departments so they can practice social distancing even when in the office. If you call, the phones will be answered as always.

We have separated our line crews from other employees and even from each other to limit possible spread of the virus. Trucks are being relocated so lineworkers can head to the job site without coming to the office. New routines are in place for contractors working on our system in order to keep them away from employees. Deliveries are being quarantined.

Our management team and board are meeting constantly to fine-tune this plan. We're in constant contact with other electric cooperatives in Kansas and Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., which in turn is working closely

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Speak Up! Listen Up!

Rolling Hills Electric hosted “Speak up! Listen Up!” March 5 and 6. Joining Rolling Hills were employees from Prairie Land Electric Cooperative. Larry Detwiler, director of Loss Control, Safety and Compliance at Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., led each of the one-day sessions addressing potential situations. Have you ever taken or seen a co-worker take a shortcut or other action knowing that it does not meet safety compliance? What should you do if you see this happen? What is the appropriate manner to confront this employee? How is he or she going to react?

A shortcut or other unsafe function may work one time or a thousand times with no injury, but it only takes one time for an injury or worse to happen. All of us at times become frustrated, overly exhausted, in a hurry or just don't have our mind focused on our job. It could be as minor as answering a phone call or text or tripping over an open drawer. But when it comes to electricity and the safety of others and ourselves, we need to “Speak Up! Listen Up!” when we see something unsafe or someone not following safety protocol.



WATT'S HAPPENING

Life as We Once Knew It

It's the middle of March. Parent teacher conferences were over or in the process then spring break. The nation is carrying on as normal. Spring break trips and other activities are planned. Life is good! Right?

Then Gov. Kelly announces that she is canceling school for the rest of the year. Oh my goodness! This is ridiculous! It's a hoax! It's all political! Believe me, we've all heard it day in and day out for the past few weeks. Guess what? It's real and it's in our communities.

Rolling Hills Electric was proactive, listening to the experts and taking this pandemic seriously for the sake of its employees and our members. Manager Doug Jackson visited with all employees during the March safety meeting regarding the severity of this virus. Employees were encouraged to avoid traveling to hotspots, large gatherings and to be aware of their surroundings.

We became more diligent with hand-washing and sanitizing work areas. Members were notified that the office would be closed to visitors until further notice to prevent the spread of the virus to members and employees. Payments could be made electronically or placed in the night drops at Ellsworth, Beloit, Mankato or Belleville. Vendors were notified that we were only accepting deliveries of material and poles.

Key staff began daily COVID-19 update meetings and provided the

information to all employees via email. Contingency plans were reviewed and updated as needed. It became apparent that we needed to separate staff by department — linemen/warehouse, operations and administrative. A few days later, more staff distancing was implemented. Linemen were divided into smaller groups and a few administrative staff began working from home.

At press time in mid-April, reality is really beginning to set in. Each day the cases grow, but all employees remain healthy and on the job. Confirmed cases are showing up within counties that Rolling Hills Electric serves. Only Ellsworth, Lincoln and Russell counties have no confirmed cases as of April 7, but that could change at anytime.

Social distancing may be an inconvenience to many of us. But, if it saves a family member, friend, co-worker or member from becoming ill or worse, that inconvenience shall also pass. Living in rural Kansas has its benefits and keeping 6 feet apart from your neighbor is pretty easy. Let's work together to keep our families, friends and everyone else safe and healthy until life changes back to a some what new normal. Take care!



Linnea Beebe

We Are Still Working Hard for You *Continued from page 16A*

with our national association, the state legislature, and Gov. Laura Kelly.

So far, it is working well and everyone has adapted to the new norm. That's because we've done this before. Nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation. It's kind of like gold that has been tested in fire — stronger and more beautiful!

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, stay home and we will get through this together the cooperative way!

Electric Co-ops Suspend Member Disconnects During COVID-19

Electric cooperatives are responding to COVID-19 by taking steps to protect employees, maintain reliable and affordable services and support their communities.

Electric co-ops are built by, and belong to, the communities we serve. That community focus drives co-ops as they respond to evolving COVID-19 challenges and local concerns.

Not-for-profit electric co-ops have no shareholders and routinely return excess revenues to their members. Because of this structure and the desire to keep energy costs as low as possible, some co-ops have limited reserve margins to sustain high rates of nonpayment.

Many electric cooperatives have temporarily suspended disconnecting electric service to support their members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is one of many steps co-ops have taken to reduce stress and provide local families and businesses with certainty during an uncertain time.

Importantly, these disconnect suspensions are not bill waivers. That's why many co-ops are also working with members on deferred payment plans and other assistance to ease the transition once the pandemic has passed.

Electric cooperatives are encouraging their consumer-members to pay at least a portion of their bill as they are able. Taking this simple step can help avoid a large multi-month balance when the pandemic is over.

As co-op consumer-members spend more time at home, they may see a surge in home energy use. Some steps members can take to help control their energy bills include:

- ▶ Program your thermostat to maximize energy savings. Setting your thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5%.
- ▶ Do full loads of laundry. Washing a full load at a time saves energy. Using cold water also saves energy; however, during this pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control recommends using the warmest appropriate water setting per the manufacturer's instructions and to dry items completely.
- ▶ Air dry dishes. This step can cut your dishwasher's energy use by up to 50%.
- ▶ Substitute LEDs for conventional light bulbs. Lighting can amount up to 12% of monthly energy use. LED bulbs can cut lighting costs by 75%.

Rolling Hills Electric Welcomes Two New Employees



Tyler Bailey

TYLER BAILEY joined the Beloit area line department as a journeyman lineman. His hometown is Ellsworth, where he participated in school sports. He still attempts to play every sport under the sun.

Following high school, he attended Ottawa University for two years then transferred to and graduated from Washburn

University. He received his bachelor's degree in history with a minor in political science.

Bailey was previously employed by the City of Beloit for the past seven years, where he achieved the journeyman lineman designation.

Bailey and his wife, Keegan, are Beloit residents. They will be married for nine years and have two children, Isabelle, 6, and Cooper, 3. They are expecting their third child in September.

"Rolling Hills takes care of its employees in its entirety. They focus on the latest trends in technology, safety or whatever may come down the track," Bailey said. "As a company, there is a strong bond between employee and company. That's why there are so many employees

with great service years. I feel it is a privilege to work with a great company like Rolling Hills."

Rolling Hills Electric also welcomed **RILEY MOORE** back in March. Previously, he had interned during the summer with the Belleville crew and has now rejoined them as a full-time apprentice lineman.

Moore's hometown is Haddam, in Washington County. His parents are Danny and Tina Moore and he has one sister, Courtney. Prior to joining Rolling Hills, Moore worked on the family farm.

Moore enjoys hunting, fishing, working out and is excited to remain in the area so he can continue his hobbies and sports.

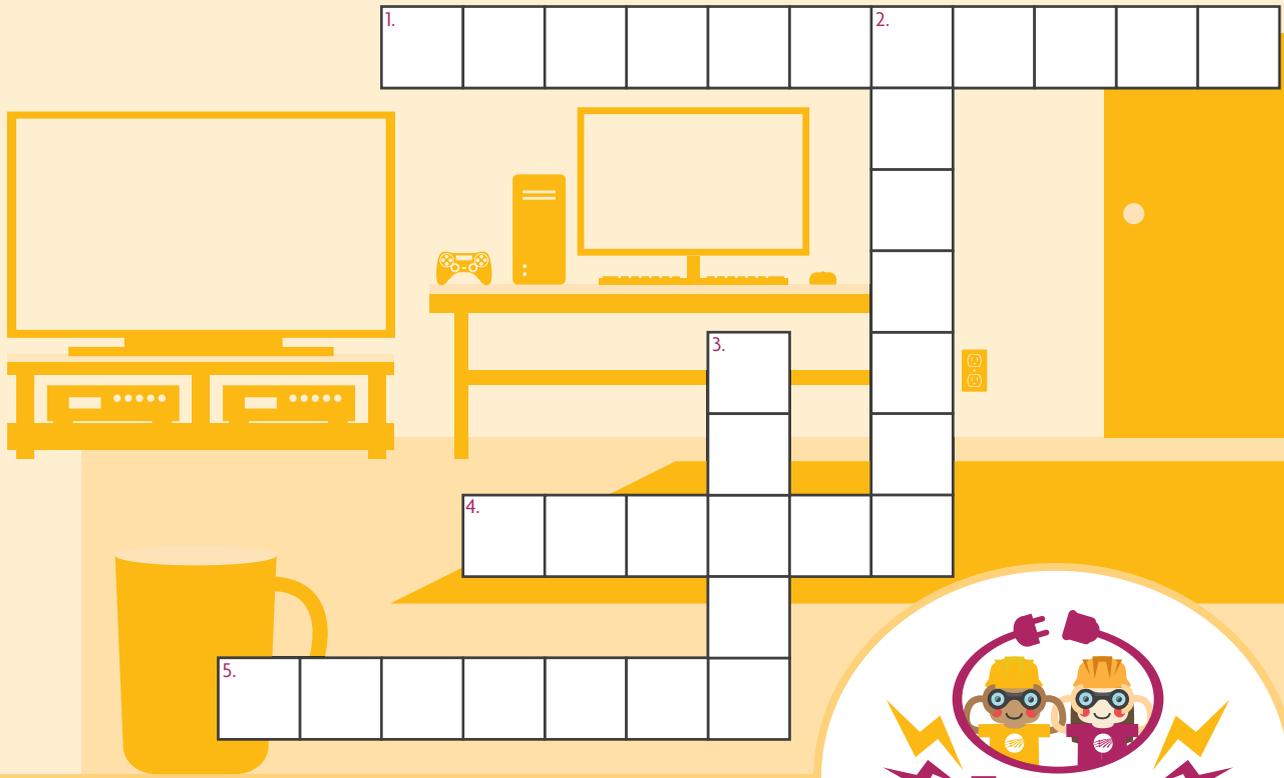
Moore graduated from Washington County High School where he was active in football, basketball and golf. Post high school, he attended Pratt Community College with his focus on the Electrical Power Technology program.

On behalf of Rolling Hills Electric, we welcome Tyler, Riley and their families into our cooperative family.



Riley Moore

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



May is Electrical Safety Month!

Read the safety tips below to complete the crossword puzzle.

1. **ACROSS:** Keep all liquids away from _____, like TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
2. **DOWN:** Never overload electrical _____. This creates a greater risk of fire.
3. **DOWN:** Never use electrical _____ that feel warm to the touch or are damaged in any way.
4. **ACROSS:** Smoke _____ should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
5. **ACROSS:** Don't run electrical cords under rugs. This creates potential fire _____.

1. electronics 2. outlets 3. cords 4. hazards 5. alarms

ANSWER KEY