



ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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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

Power On: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community — and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Rolling Hills Electric, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving a special community like ours.

Who would have fathomed in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we have all been challenged to operate differently, and Rolling Hills Electric has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Some staff worked

remotely. In the office, we limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We also adjusted our walk-in office availability and in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. In addition, we canceled our annual meeting and the annual Coopportunity Day luncheon. For the health and safety of everyone, we think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who have needed help with their electric bills, we have waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements.

And while we certainly missed visiting with you in person, we found new ways to stay connected. We had the opportunity to visit with more members across our system when they would call in with questions or to pay over the phone. Like many of us, our members were limiting their exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast about Rolling Hills Electric, but to explain how much we care.

We’ve seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during



Doug Jackson

Continued on page 16C ▶

Cooportunity Day Canceled

October is Cooperative Month. For more than 20 years, Rolling Hills Electric, Farmway Credit Union and Central Valley Ag have celebrated with a free luncheon for their members and community. Organizers met by videoconference to determine if we should continue planning or cancel the event. Not knowing if we would be experiencing a growing number of cases, we decided to meet by videoconference again in August. Summer sports and activities were resuming, and new cases of COVID-19 were occurring. Organizers decided to play the “safe” card and cancel the luncheon. We regret having to cancel. We appreciate our members and want all to stay safe and healthy. Your cooperatives thank each of you for your continued support.

Heat Pump Rebates

Have you installed a heat pump recently or are you thinking about updating your existing heating and cooling system? Rolling Hills Electric has rebates available for both the air source heat pump and the geothermal heat pump. Rebates are based on the type of system, the seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) or energy efficient ratio (EER) and the tonnage. The rebate will come directly from Rolling Hills Electric once the system is completely installed, the certificate of installation is received, and the system inspected by our technician.

Also, heat pumps qualify for one of two rate structures. If your home is ALL electric with no fossil fuel, you will be eligible for the heat pump rate. If you have a heat pump and use a fossil fuel such as propane or natural gas for backup heat, the account will be billed at the all-electric rate.

Geothermal heat pump systems qualify for a tax credit in the amount of 26% through Dec. 31, 2020. The percentage of the tax credit will decrease to 22% in 2021. This credit will be taken during your tax preparation. There is also a \$300 tax credit available for Energy-Star air conditioners and heat pumps that are installed, some restrictions apply. If you should have questions regarding the above, call Linnea at 785-534-1601.

Cast Your Vote Nov. 3

Kansas’ electric cooperatives’ top priority is providing consumer-members with safe, reliable and affordable energy. But this job requires more than stringing and maintaining power lines. It requires political engagement. That may seem far removed from our core mission, but it’s absolutely essential to the services cooperatives provide.

That’s why electric co-ops in Kansas and across the country are participating in Co-ops Vote, a nonpartisan program that encourages all co-op members to participate in national, state and local elections. The program also aims to educate political candidates and elected officials about the important role electric cooperatives play in their local communities.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing the nation’s electric co-ops, launched Co-ops Vote in 2016. Co-ops Vote started as a national get-out-the-vote initiative that helped drive rural voter turnout.

As co-ops, the civic virtue of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community — one of the seven cooperative principles — through participation in our democracy.

Co-ops have another advantage. Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the electric cooperative family has put into political engagement. When we all get involved, we can make things happen politically and in our local communities.

We know Election Day may look a little different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that’s why we’re encouraging all co-op members to stay engaged and informed of any changes to polling locations or absentee and mail-in balloting procedures. In Kansas, voter registration deadline is Tuesday, Oct. 13; if registering by mail it must be postmarked by Oct. 13. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Tuesday, Oct. 27; the deadline to return completed ballot is Friday, Nov. 6 (date of postmark). Don’t wait — mail in your registration and ballots early as the pandemic has created delays in mail delivery.

Voting is central to American democracy. We hope you will commit to cast your ballot on Nov. 3. To learn more about the upcoming elections and access resources that can help you stay informed, visit www.vote.coop.

Rural communities depend on co-op voters.

- Learn about the issues.
- Talk to your family and friends.
- Cast your vote.

Election Day is November 3, 2020



Be an active participant in our democracy. Be a co-op voter.
www.vote.coop

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 21% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY-STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Sources: energystar.gov and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory



Rolling Hills Hosts Summer Interns

Each summer, Rolling Hills Electric assists future linemen in fulfilling their summer internships to receive their Electrical Power Technology Certificate from Pratt Community College, or the Electrical Power and Distribution certificate or degree from Manhattan Technical College.

On the job training is a requirement and it benefits Rolling Hills Electric. The interns are restricted to certain tasks, but they can always observe and learn field experience. Several of our journeymen linemen got their start with Rolling Hills Electric through a summer internship or as a temporary employee assisting during Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) projects.

Interns assisting in the Ellsworth District are **TRISTAN SOUKUP** and **GRANT WEINHOLD**; in the Mankato District is **HUDSON SMITH**; in the Osborne area is **DREW BURGER**; and **WILLIAM OLDHAM IS** in the Belleville District. We welcome and thank these young men as they pursue their future job opportunities.



Drew Burger



William Oldham



Hudson Smith



Tristan Soukup



Grant Weinhold

Help Us Help You — Update Your Contact Info

Rolling Hills Electric will attempt to contact you when we have a planned outage. Sometimes, planned outages come up unexpectedly and there is not time to notify you before the power must be shut off. This could be for safety reasons or to make immediate repairs.

Sometimes when we do have unplanned outages, we may contact you to see if your power is back on prior to our crew leaving the area. Also, should we notice an abnormal kilowatt-hour usage, we may call you to see

if you have begun using electricity differently. Perhaps you have begun watering livestock, welding, irrigating, drying seed or have a water leak or tank overflowing.

Many consumer-members no longer use a landline telephone, but have not updated their primary contact number. This means that our calls will not reach you.

Help us help you by calling 785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572 during regular business hours to update your contact number.

Power On: October is National Co-op Month *Continued from page 16A* ▶

this time, because that's what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I'm heartened to see everyone pulling together. Over the past 80 years, your electric cooperative was built by the communities to serve the communities, and that is what we will continue to do — Power On.

How Smart is a SMART THERMOSTAT?



MYTH My thermostat automatically saves me money.

FACT That depends on how it's programmed and your preferences. It still uses the same amount of energy to reach and maintain temperatures.



MYTH A smart thermostat is smart straight out of the box.

FACT The thermostat needs a little time to learn your heating and cooling preferences.



MYTH My thermostat is only as smart as I am.

FACT Sort of. Most models are independent thinkers and adjust the temperature if no one's home.



MYTH It's creepy, my smart thermostat seems to know when I'm home.

FACT It's smart for a reason! Geotechnology syncs your thermostat with your arrival. Some models use geofencing technology that tracks your smart phone location and kicks on when you're nearby.



MYTH My smart thermostat makes me smarter.

FACT We'll give you this one! It can help you save money and make your home more efficient.

CO-OP MONTH FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?

Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about a few ways co-ops are unique! Use the word bank if you need help.



1. Co-ops and their members work together toward a common _____.
2. Co-ops are _____ organizations, so they understand the communities they serve.
3. All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative _____.
4. Concern for _____ is the seventh cooperative principle.
5. Co-ops don't have customers; we have _____.
6. Co-ops are _____ by the members they serve.

WORD BANK

LED
LOCAL

GOAL
PRINCIPLES

MEMBERS
COMMUNITY

Answer Key: 1) goal 2) local 3) principles 4) community 5) members 6) led