



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From our cooperative family to yours,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Joe Ackley	Brent Edgecomb	Rita Hughes	Frank Ortega	Tim Smoots
Dan Adox	Sarah Farlee	Jerry Ireland, Jr.	Ken Ottensmeier	Paula Spreer
Britton Anderson	Ron Forshee	Mike Jones	Desiree Outersky	Zach Sterling
Darren Anderson	Steve Foss	Michael Kay	Chris Farr	Cody Theobald
Larry Barker	Matthew Frye	Greg Kramer	Zane Peak	Brooks Vaughn
Mary Barker	David Gechter	Matt Lambert	Jacob Pineau	Randy Wager
Bryce Best	Loren Goss	Dean Lasher	Jennifer Ping	Jeff Werner
Tanner Bristol	Kyle Hallgren	Nolan Lewis	Mark Raines	Lindsey West
Derrick Brown	John Hamm	John Malone	Randy Richards	Mitch West
Sarah Broxterman	Curtis Havenstein	Bridgett McGhee	Bobby Riedel	Kasey Whitaker
Jessica Bryan	Brad Hedeman	Danny Mehroff	Kelsey Schmidt	Gary Willits
Corey Calvert	Adam Hernandez	Katie Metz	Noah Schreck	Scott Wright
Jeremy Cameron	Paul Herring	Michelle Meyer	Justin Seale	Eric Wylie
Rod Crowder	Jim Holwick	Tom Mitchell	Bryce Shaver	
Traci DePriest	Kim Howbert	Jordann Moody	Rick Smoots	

## Right-of-Way Clearing Increases Safety and Reliability

Clearing trees can be inconvenient for our members. However, the work that we do to keep lines clear of vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our members. Tree-related outages account for 15 percent of service disruption.

Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative and LIEC employ in-house tree crews dedicated to right-of-way clearing. These crews work to reduce outages caused by trees and reduce line loss. Every tree that grows too close to lines is a source of loss, and that means wasted energy.

The co-op's tree crew began at the East District (LIEC) in 2000. Since inception, the tree crew has been working not only on vegetation management across the territories but also during outages when tree damage needs to be cleared in order to make repairs to damaged infrastructure. By maintaining a comprehensive, regular tree-trimming program, FreeState Electric Cooperative can reduce these safety concerns and service interruptions.

### Why clearing is necessary

Trees make our communities beautiful, but tree limbs and power lines are not a good combination. FreeState Electric's distribution lines carry our members' electricity and must be kept clear to protect their safety and keep their electric service reliable. By trimming trees, we are

able to reduce safety hazards and electrical outages.

The East and West District (Kaw Valley) tree crews are trained professionals and are equipped to clear vegetation safely. If you need vegetation management, do not try to clear the vegetation on your own; instead, contact your District to report the problem. FreeState would like to remind you of the following safety tips:

- ▶ **NEVER** attempt to clear the lines yourself;
  - ▶ **NEVER** climb a tree with branches near lines; and
  - ▶ **NEVER** touch power lines
- ▶ **CONTACT** with power lines could result in serious injury or death.

### Reporting

Members are asked to call the cooperative if they observe a problem along the lines. Our crew can only address issues that they are aware of. We rely on our members to help identify problem areas.

### Providing access

We work with members as much as we can when it comes to planning tree maintenance. However, it is important for all members to keep the co-op updated with your current contact information.

The tree crew can be called to clear the right-of-way after an outage, but the crew is dedicated full time to the system. This means a lot

of jobs are done to take precautionary or proactive measures.

### Tree crew priorities include:

- ▶ **Outages** – Assisting linemen by clearing areas where trees or tree damage hinder infrastructure repair. Due to safety concerns, these jobs are always done as efficiently and as quickly as possible.
- ▶ **Rebuilds** – The tree crew clears areas for linemen to make updates to the infrastructure without any obstacles.
- ▶ **Trouble spots** – These are areas that experience frequent outages. The tree crew works closely with the operations crew to identify these areas and address them as quickly as possible.
- ▶ **Member requests** – The cooperative appreciates member reports and requests to help reduce damages and maintain safety and reliability. Member requests are prioritized by the level of danger posed to members, member property or the FreeState infrastructure. Therefore, the timeline of job completion may vary depending on the circumstances.

### Pruning practices

Our tree crews prune trees according to industry standards to achieve aesthetic value, as well as prolonged clearance.

We look specifically for trees

or vegetation that could interfere with our lines, conductors, substations and other infrastructure. In most cases, vegetation that is removed will be ground up on site or chipped. Wood is usually left where the tree was removed.

When pruning or doing clearing, the co-op abides to the following procedures:

- ▶ Mark trees with a red ribbon to indicate removal.
- ▶ Remove trees rather than just trimming them to the point they appear "butchered."
- ▶ Work with members who have trees they want to keep. Our priority is not only clearing lines but also being considerate of member's property.
- ▶ Prune to keep tree health in mind.
- ▶ Help members choose an appropriate tree to plant in the right location.
- ▶ Trim trees up to the meter. Any lines or infrastructure beyond the meter is the responsibility of the member.
- ▶ Leave the member's property as clean as possible.
- ▶ Deliver wood chips to members directly. If a member is interested in chips, contact the office to be put on the list. We make an effort to accommodate any requests.

### Chemical application

The tree crew does have access

and training to apply chemicals on specific clearing jobs.

Our crews will only utilize non-restricted use chemicals: Pathway, Imazapyr and Triclopyr blend, Diuron, Garlon 4, Krenite, and Hyvar. Any of the mentioned chemicals are available to the general public and pose little to no risk to pets or nearby plants when applied according to label instructions.

Chemicals are only applied under the direct supervision of an employee who is a Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicator. Cut stumps are treated with a low pressure, hand-held sprayer to prevent regrowth. Untreated stumps grow back very quickly, and the growth can often be thicker and more troublesome than the original vegetation. At times we use higher pressure, foliar application when needed. Chemical application is important to our ability to maintain a clear right-of-way.

During spring and early summer months (April through June) the tree crews may apply chemicals to areas that have the potential to limit access to infrastructure. These areas often include substations and power lines that have been previously cleared.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the chemicals being applied, contact Randy Wager at 800-794-1989.

### Your Cooperative's Tree Crew



**Randy Wager**  
Right-of-Way  
Superintendent\*



**John Hamm**  
East District  
Tree Crew Foreman\*



**Mat Frye**  
West District  
Tree Crew Foreman\*



**Danny Mehroff**  
East District  
Tree Trimmer\*\*



**Jeff Werner**  
East District  
Tree Trimmer\*\*



**Scott Wright**  
East District  
Tree Trimmer\*\*



**Tanner Bristol**  
East District  
1st-Year Tree Trimmer



**Dan Adcox**  
East District  
2nd-Year Tree Trimmer



**Derrick Brown**  
West District  
Tree Crew Groundsman



**Cody Theobald**  
West District  
Tree Crew Groundsman

### Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$13.8 billion to members since 1988—\$1 billion in 2015 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

**\$1 billion**  
in 2015

**\$13.8 billion**  
since 1988

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Finance Corporation

### Tip of the Month

Electric bills increase during the winter for a variety of reasons—holiday gatherings, houseguests, and shorter days and longer nights. Small measures, like turning down your thermostat, replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs, and washing clothes in cold water can help control energy costs.

### Holiday Office Closings

Our offices will be closed the following dates during the upcoming holiday season:

**Christmas**  
▶ Friday, Dec. 23  
▶ Monday, Dec. 26

**New Year's 2017**  
▶ Monday, Jan. 2  
Kaw Valley Electric and LIEC would like to wish you and your family a joyful and safe festive season.

