

## Find Help Paying Your Utility Bills

The following agencies have been known to assist people who may need help paying utility bills. Kaw Valley and LJEC are not affiliated with any of these organizations. Contact information is provided as a courtesy to you, our members.

- ▶ **American Red Cross**
  - ▶ Topeka: 785-234-0568
  - ▶ Leavenworth: 913-682-6222
  - ▶ Atchison: 913-367-5355
- ▶ **Doorstep Topeka**
  - ▶ 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.
  - ▶ 785-357-5341
- ▶ **Jefferson County Service Organization**
  - ▶ 785-863-2637
- ▶ **Kansas Children's Service League**
  - ▶ 785-357-4763
  - ▶ Must have children living in the house
- ▶ **Let's Help**
  - ▶ 200 S. Kansas Ave., Topeka
  - ▶ 785-234-6208
  - ▶ By appointment only
- ▶ **Northeast Kansas Community Action Program (NEK-CAP)**
  - ▶ Holton: 785-364-3266
  - ▶ Topeka: 785-235-9296
- ▶ **Penn House**
  - ▶ 1035 Pennsylvania St., Lawrence
  - ▶ 785-842-0440
- ▶ **Topeka Salvation Army**
  - ▶ 785-233-9648
- ▶ **Share the Warmth**
  - ▶ 816-285-2796
- ▶ **SRS - Social Rehabilitative Service LIEAP - Low Income Energy Assistance Program**
  - ▶ www.ks-energy-assistance.com/lieap
  - ▶ 800-432-0043
  - ▶ 500 Van Buren, Topeka, 785-296-2500
  - ▶ 1901 Delaware, Lawrence, 785-832-3700
  - ▶ Available Jan. to March
- ▶ **The Good Shephard**
  - ▶ 913-845-3964
- ▶ **Topeka North Outreach**
  - ▶ 785-286-1370
- ▶ **Warm Hearts**
  - ▶ 785-841-5756

## Reconnect Your Electricity During Regular Business Hours

Effective immediately, reconnection for previously delinquent accounts will be scheduled during regular business hours only; therefore, the co-op will not offer reconnection service after hours.

To ensure you are not inconvenienced by this change, make sure your bill is paid before the disconnect date. Please call the Member Services department with your questions at 785-478-3444.

## FreeState in Your Communities

As part of our transition to a unified cooperative, we have installed FreeState logos on the newest trucks in the fleet. The new logo will soon be added to the rest of the fleet.

In addition, the signs at both district offices will be updated. FreeState is honored to be become a part of your communities.

**Look for FreeState Electric Cooperative in your community. The co-op began installing the FreeState logo on the co-ops newest fleet.**



## West District Opts out of Cold Weather Rule

In the past, the West District (Kaw Valley) has participated in the Cold Weather Rule established by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) that restricts electric disconnects between Nov. 1 through March 31, or when temperature forecasts are 35 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Since 1996, individual Kansas electric cooperatives have been responsible for establishing seasonal rules appropriate for their own cooperative because electric cooperatives are not mandated to

participate in this policy. Kaw Valley Electric was deregulated from the KCC on June 15, 2001.

In the July Board meeting, the West District Board of Directors opted to waive participation in the cold weather rule for West District members effective Oct. 1, 2016.

Temperatures will no longer be a governing factor in disconnection for non-payment, and payment arrangements will no longer be available on past due accounts. All accounts are subject to disconnection for non-payment.

## Tip of the Month

An average household dedicates about 5 percent of its energy budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the Energy Star rating, you can save up to \$75 each year.

## FreeState Celebrates National Co-op Month

Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. FreeState Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Co-op Month in October, along with 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide.

"Cooperatives Build" is the theme of this year's National Co-op Month. "This year's theme is excellent, because there are so many ways that cooperatives help to build a stronger rural America," said CEO Steve Foss.

### Cooperatives Build Trust

FreeState strives to adhere to seven key cooperative principles, which combine to help build trust between the cooperative, its members and the community. For example, the first principle is **Voluntary and Open Membership**, which means that we are a voluntary organization open to all people able to use our services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership.

The second principle, **Democratic Member Control**, gives members a voice in the cooperative's policies and decisions. Through the fifth principle, **Education, Training and In-**

**FreeState strives to adhere to seven co-op principles, which help build trust between the co-op, its members and the community.**

**formation**, we enable members to contribute to the development of our cooperative.

### Cooperatives Build Community

The seventh cooperative principle is **Concern for Community**. Co-ops work for the sustainable development of their communities through employee involvement in local organizations, through charitable contributions to community efforts and through support for schools.

### Cooperatives Build Jobs

Co-ops create jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services. Co-ops often take part in community outreach programs, ensuring that everyone benefits from the co-op experience.

According to the latest data, more than 130 million people belong to a co-op in the U.S. alone, and co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans. This speaks to the heart of why we must take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the co-op business model.



**ELECTRIC CO-OPS  
BUILD  
COMMUNITY**



## Kaw Valley & LJEC Electric Cooperatives

### Board of Trustees

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Dallas Caster</b><br>Kaw Valley, President                     | <b>Jeanine Murphy</b><br>LJEC, President & Governance Member |
| <b>Rob Sage</b><br>Kaw Valley, Vice President & Governance Member | <b>Mark Gratny</b><br>LJEC, Vice President                   |
| <b>Mark Wulfkuhle</b><br>Kaw Valley, Secretary                    | <b>Marty Shaw</b><br>LJEC, Secretary                         |
| <b>Larry Butel</b><br>Kaw Valley, Treasurer & Governance Member   | <b>Harlan Hunt</b><br>LJEC, Treasurer & Governance Member    |
| <b>Gene "Pete" Allen</b><br>Kaw Valley, Trustee                   | <b>Ken Bailey</b><br>LJEC, Trustee                           |
| <b>Bill Conley</b><br>Kaw Valley, Trustee                         | <b>Larry Meadows</b><br>LJEC, Trustee                        |
| <b>Don Montgomery</b><br>Kaw Valley, Trustee                      | <b>Ralph Phillips</b><br>LJEC, Trustee                       |
| <b>Lloyd Wulfkuhle</b><br>Kaw Valley, Trustee                     | <b>Bill Pohl</b><br>LJEC, Trustee                            |
| <b>Gregory Lee</b><br>Kaw Valley, Legal Counsel                   | <b>Larry Stevens</b><br>LJEC, Trustee Governance Member      |
|   | <b>John Wine</b><br>LJEC, Legal Counsel                      |

### Staff

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Steve Foss</b><br>Chief Executive Officer   | <b>Christopher Parr</b><br>East District Assistant Manager |
| <b>Randy Richards</b><br>West District Assistant Manager                             |  |
| <b>Office Hours</b><br><b>Kaw Valley, West District Office</b><br>7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. | <b>LJEC, East District Office</b><br>7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.    |

## FROM THE CEO

## Mirroring Co-ops as the Transition Begins



Steve Foss

Electric Cooperative. I want to take a few moments to talk about the projects we've been working on to prepare for Jan. 1.

### New billing options

You now have multiple options when it comes to paying your monthly bills. We have the **PRE-PAY PROGRAM**, which allows members to pay for electricity in smaller, more frequent payments, before it is consumed. The **BUDGET BILLING PROGRAM** is an option for members who are budget conscious and want to pay consistent amounts over three-month cycles.

Of course we also have our traditional billing and paperless billing available.

### A new look

At the end of August, we installed our new FreeState Electric Cooperative logo on the six newest trucks in the cooperative fleet. I was excited

to see this new look to our trucks. We'll start to change some of our older trucks this fall, and we will also be getting a new sign in front of both district offices.

### New fee structure

As of October 1, we will implement a new fee structure for our members. We eliminated the meter reading fee, and disconnection and reconnection fees. There is no longer a fee associated with new member application, and service calls during business hours are now free of charge.

As we approach the beginning of the new FreeState Electric Cooperative, our goal is to keep you informed of the updates, adjustments, and new options available to our cooperative members.

This month's centerspread is filled with information important to each of our members. Take the time to read through it, and if you have any questions we encourage you to give us a call. We're happy to explain or work through any questions you have regarding your service. We are here to help you.

As always, if you have questions regarding this centerspread, or the content presented, contact your district office, or email marketing@freestate.coop.

# NOTICE: Updates to Fee Structure

*\*Effective Oct. 1, 2016*

As of October 1, 2016, a new fee structure has been implemented for East and West District members. In addition, a 10 percent past due fee will be assessed to delinquent accounts.

Please review the new fee structure below.

If you have questions, please call our office at 785-478-3444.

Service	Cost
Meter reading	\$0
Non-payment fee	\$35
Delinquent penalty fee <i>Charged the day after remit due date</i>	10% of past due
Disconnect service	\$0
Reconnect service	\$0
Temporary service fee	\$50
Meter testing fee	Based on meter cost
Returned check fee	\$30
Meter tampering fee <i>Member also owes estimated lost kWh for up to one year</i>	\$300
New service application	\$0
Service call ( <i>during business hours</i> )	\$0
Service call ( <i>after business hours</i> ) <i>Charged if problem is on member side of the meter</i>	\$150
Underground locate	Third-party direct bill
Member-owned security light	Labor cost plus material
New account deposit	Determined by applicant credit score

## Time-of-Use Rate Will Have to Wait

West District (Kaw Valley) members will not see the addition of a “time-of-use” rate as FreeState Electric Cooperative becomes official on January 1, 2017.

During the months of July through September, the time-of-use rate encourages East District (LJEC) members to voluntarily cut back on their electrical usage from 3 to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday to reduce the co-op’s peak demand. The peak demand that East District members set during this five-hour period on week-days during July to September sets a large portion of the co-op’s cost of wholesale power for the following eight months of October through May of the following year.

The time-of-use rate charges more money per kilowatt hour during peak hours (3 to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday) and less money per kilowatt-hour during non-peak hours (all other times, holidays and weekends). When a member participates in the voluntary time-of-use rate and reduces their consumption during peak hours, it results in savings on their electric bill.

East District cooperative members currently have the option to participate in the voluntary time-of-use; however, because the East and West Districts purchase power from two different suppliers, FreeState is unable to offer this rate option to West District members at this time.

“The East District’s power supplier is KEPCo, and the West District purchases power from Westar,” said Steve Foss CEO.

“Different power suppliers results in different rate structures, which keeps us from offering the time-of-use rate to our West District members.”

To implement a new rate option, FreeState would need to conduct a cost of service study, but as a result, rates would likely increase for all members.

“A rate increase would detract from FreeState’s goal of maintaining member savings,” Foss added.

Members of both districts have not seen an increase in rates for some time. The last rate increase for the East District occurred in 2010, and the West District has not had a rate increase since 2012.

“In order to maintain the current rates for the next three to five years, West District members will have to wait until the next cost of service study to implement time-of-use rate,” said Chris Parr, East District assistant general manager. “If we pay for a cost of service study, we need to look at all rates.”

“Until we get to the point of our next rate adjustment we encourage our members to conserve energy when they can,” said Parr. “No matter what the rate is or cost per kilowatt hour, using less energy overall still saves members money, and helps us manage the cooperative’s cost of wholesale power.”

“If members in the West District conserve energy from 3 to 8 p.m. on peak days, it does help our total power bill,” Parr added. “Any size savings on our power bill will result in an overall savings to all of our members, and that helps us keep our rates stable.”

**A rate increase would detract from FreeState’s goal of maintaining member savings.**

## West District Transitions from Payment Plan to Pre-Pay Program

Kaw Valley Electric Board of Directors has approved a new bill payment option for members that replaces previous payment plans.

Eligible members now have the option to enroll in the Pre-Pay Program explained in last month’s centerspread. This option is designed to help members keep their services on by making more frequent payments in smaller amounts (\$20 minimum). This new program replaces

the payment plans on past due accounts.

All accounts are subject to disconnection for non-payment. To help manage your payments, consider participating in your district’s Pre-Pay Program.

If you have any questions about your eligibility for the Pre-Pay Program, please call our office at 785-478-3444.

## Interested in Pre-Pay? Find the Answers to Your Questions

### How do I set up my Pre-Pay account?

New members pay an up-front payment of \$50 to start the program. Existing members pay an initial payment of at least the past due balance owed on their account. All amounts owed at the time of sign up, including calculated energy used, must be put in an arrangement to pay off over time. Fifty percent of any payment, including the initial payment, will be applied until the amount due is paid in full. If a deposit is already on file, it will be credited toward the amount owed.

### Will my billing cycle change?

You will no longer receive a monthly bill in the mail. The Pre-Pay Program makes daily readings and an email is generated when your account balance falls below \$30. However, each month there is a “true up” of the previous month’s charges during our regular monthly billing cycle. This “true up” could result in an unusually high or low daily bill amount.

### What does “true up” mean?

When the monthly system-wide billing runs, the actual Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) (East District) or Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) (West District) figure is updated for prepaid accounts by going back and refiguring charges based on the real PPA or PCA. Members may see this “true-up” the day after our system-wide billing.

### When is my account billed?

Each day, we calculate and bill your

electricity usage. Your bill is calculated by the kilowatt-hour (kWh) used, estimated PPA/PCA, prorated Electric Service Charge, prorated devices charges and tax. This amount is then deducted from any credit on your account.

### When can I make a payment?

Payments can be made at any time. You do not have to wait for a notification to add funds to your account.

### What is the minimum payment?

The minimum payment is \$20, but it is important to remember that 50 percent of any payment goes toward an outstanding balance, and 50 percent of the payment goes toward current electricity usage. If you do not have a past balance or arrangement, 100 percent of your payment pays for your current electric consumption.

### How am I alerted when my account balance gets low?

When your account reaches \$30 or below, an email is generated. For this reason, it is critical that you provide the co-op with a valid, frequently monitored email address. Failure to receive the email message could result in service disconnection when account funds are not replenished.

### Who monitors the account balance?

Each member enrolled in the Pre-Pay Program is responsible for monitoring the account balance. It is also important to note that service will be

subject to disconnection any day of the week without any personal notification from the co-op if the account balance reaches \$0.

### How do I monitor the account?

Members are encouraged to sign up for SmartHub to monitor accounts and energy consumption. You can make payments via SmartHub also. SmartHub is available online or as a mobile app. Within the SmartHub application, members can sign up for additional emails and text notifications regarding their account.

### Does the co-op still accept payments from a help agency?

Yes. Any funds you provide from a help agency will be credited to your account once received by the co-op. However, payment pledges will not postpone disconnection.

### What if I reach \$0, and my service does get disconnected?

There are no disconnect or reconnect fees on the Pre-Pay Program. If your account reaches \$0, an email is generated notifying your electric service will automatically disconnect. You can purchase more power online or by phone, any time of day, seven days a week. Your power will be restored after funds are added to your account.

### What if I want to go back to regular billing?

If you chooses to return to regular billing, a deposit will be required based on the current co-op criteria.

## On a Budget? We can Help with Budget Billing

Variable energy consumption during seasonal peaks can create energy bills that are higher or lower than expected. We understand that unexpected increases in a monthly bill can be overwhelming. To help our members manage their payments, your district offers Budget Billing. This program is designed to keep monthly payments manageable and consistent over a 12-month period.

Any residential member who has been a cooperative member for at least one year and is in good standing with a consistent on-time

payment history, is eligible to enroll in the program.

Through the Budget Billing program, the cooperative establishes your monthly amount due based on the average of your billing history over the previous 11 months. Each monthly bill will also list your actual energy usage charge during that billing cycle.

Your Budget Billing is adjusted quarterly. Every three months your Budget Billing amount due is recalculated according to your energy use, so you may see a nominal increase or decrease. But remem-

ber, the more you conserve, the more you save! Use your SmartHub account to track your actual energy use, so you can learn what adjustments you can make to help you save energy—and money.

Each member is responsible to pay for the energy they consume over the 12-month period, and delinquent payments could result in removal from the program.

For more information, see the sample bill below. If you have any questions about the Budget Billing Program please call our office at 785-478-3444.

## Understanding Your Budget Billing Statement

<b>Member Name:</b>	John Doe	
<b>Account Number:</b>	1234567	
<b>Amount Due Now:</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>	←
<b>Billing Date:</b>	10/09/2016	
<b>Please Pay By:</b>	10/26/2016	
Previous Account Balance	\$	423.46
Payment Received (Thank You!)	\$	150.00 CR
Previous Balance Due	\$	273.46
Fees/Adjustments	\$	0.00
Current Charges:		
kWh	\$	80.76
PPA	\$	17.00
Charge	\$	25.00
Total this bill cycle	\$	<b>122.76</b>
<b>New Account Balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>396.22</b>
Summary of Account		
Previous Usage Billed	\$	122.76
Payment Received	\$	150.00 CR
Previous Balance	\$	27.24 CR
Fees/Adjustments	\$	0.00
Monthly Budget Amount	\$	150.00
<b>Budget Billing Program Amount Due</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>150.00</b>

Your Budget Billing amount is set by averaging your billing history for the past 11 months. These calculations will show up on your monthly bill as the amount due.

The amount of actual member consumption is displayed as the total bill this cycle. It may be more or less than the actual amount due.

The Budget Billing Program is designed to pay this amount in smaller, more manageable increments.

Some months members will use more energy than the budget billing amount, and other months they will consume less energy.