

CURRENT News



In February, FreeState Electric Cooperative members received a comprehensive new member guide in the mail.

This guide is a resource for members that explains

several aspects of the cooperative.

For example, you'll find information on:

- ▶ Bill Paying Options
- ▶ Board of Trustees
- ▶ Capital Credits
- ▶ Cooperative Leadership
- ▶ Energy Conservation
- ▶ FreeState's Service Territory
- ▶ Member Programs
- ▶ New Construction
- ▶ Outage Information
- ▶ Paying Your Bill
- ▶ Powering Fort Leavenworth
- ▶ Pre-Pay Program
- ▶ Right-of-Way Clearance
- ▶ SmartHub
- ▶ The FreeState Fee Structure
- ▶ www.freestate.coop
- ▶ Youth Programs
- ▶ And much more!

A digital copy is also available for download on the website: <http://bit.ly/FECnmg>.

The guide includes contact information and helpful information about your new rural electric cooperative.

Leaders Address Co-op Transformation *Continued from page 16-A*

In February, we rolled out the new charitable giving program, Operation Round-Up. Operation Round-Up is a classic example of how we can all give back, no matter the level of contribution. By participating, you can empower the communities you call home with just a little spare change each month.

We are committed to donating every dime back to our local communities and communicating the successes of the program. We are also committed to investing in the program so that it may grow over time. We believe members will find tremendous satisfaction from the success stories and accomplishments of Operation Round-Up.

FreeState Electric firmly believes this program will not only carry out the co-op principles, but it will enhance our mission, vision

and core values set by the cooperative leadership.

We recognize that we have ushered in a lot of change during an uncertain time in our state, and country. We value your opinions and are eager to hear comments from our members about how the changes have impacted them personally.

The decisions made this past year have not been made lightly. The leadership and board of trustees have had thought-provoking discussions prior to making any final decisions, and the changes have been implemented with the firm belief that our membership will benefit. We will continue to consider all angles and options before we make changes in the future.

As always, if you have any questions, please call 800-794-1989 or email marketing@freestate.coop.



FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc. is not subject to the jurisdiction, regulation, supervision and control of the Kansas Corporation Commission, except as specified in K.S.A. 66-104d(f).

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large

print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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FreeState ENERGY EXPLORERS

Electric Safety ART CONTEST

Calling all Energy Explorers! Get your art supplies and create a masterpiece on the topic of electric safety. The grand prize winner will be featured on FreeState Electric Cooperative's next corporate card.

Official Contest Rules

- ▶ Contest open to children ages 12 and under (as of March 1) who live in or attend a school in the FreeState Electric service territory.
- ▶ One entry per person per contest.
- ▶ Create an artistic interpretation of electric safety.
- ▶ Entry must include (written legibly on the back) the child's name and age, parent or guardian's street address, phone number and e-mail address. If submitting as a class, please include the teacher's name, school and the teacher's email address. Entrant information will remain confidential.
- ▶ Entries must be 8.5 x 11 inches and may include any art medium.
- ▶ Entries may be submitted via email to marketing@freestate.coop, dropped off at the Topeka or McLouth co-op offices or mailed to: FreeState Art Contest c/o Sarah Farlee 507 N. Union McLouth, Kansas 66054

Age Groups (age as of March 1)

- ▶ Ages 4 and under
- ▶ Ages 4-6
- ▶ Ages 7-9
- ▶ Ages 10-12

Judging

- ▶ Entries will be judged on the basis of creativity and quality.
- ▶ Decisions are at the discretion of FreeState Electric and are subject to change.
- ▶ FreeState Electric reserves the right to award multiple winners or no winners.

Winners:

- ▶ Winners will be notified by email, phone or mail.
- ▶ Prizes will be awarded in May.
- ▶ The winners in each age group will receive a monetary award:
 - ▶ 1st place - \$25;
 - ▶ 2nd place - \$15;
 - ▶ 3rd place - \$5.
- ▶ A grand-prize winner will be selected from the top-three entries in each category and will receive an additional \$25 prize.
- ▶ The overall grand-prize winner will be featured as the artwork on the next corporate card.
- ▶ Winners will also be published in *Kansas Country Living* magazine and displayed on the co-op's website, www.freestate.coop.
- ▶ Once submitted, artwork becomes property of FreeState Electric. Original artwork will not be returned.



FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
800-794-1989
www.freestate.coop

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Board of Trustees

- | | |
|--|--|
| Larry Butel
Overbrook | Larry Meadows
Tonganoxie |
| Dallas Caster
Auburn | Don Montgomery
Burlingame |
| Bill Conley
Delia | Jeanine Murphy
Leavenworth |
| Rob Sage
Maple Hill | Ralph Phillips
Mayetta |
| Mark Gratzny
Leavenworth | Mark Wulfkuhle
Berryton |
| Harlan Hunt
Meriden | John Wine
Legal Counsel |
| Christopher Parr
Assistant General Manager | Randy Richards
Assistant General Manager |

District Offices

- | | |
|--|---|
| East District
P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS
66054-0070 | West District
1100 SW Auburn Rd
Topeka, KS 66615 |
|--|---|

East & West District Office Hours:
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tip of the Month

Air dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

FROM THE CEO & BOARD PRESIDENT

Leaders Address Co-op Transformation



Steve Foss Jeanine Murphy

As leaders within the cooperative, we have a critical job. Ushering in change as we evolve and move forward as a new co-op. It's a job neither of us takes lightly.

There has been a lot of change in the past two years for our co-op members. We understand that because there has been a lot of change behind the scenes. The employees and board of trustees have undergone constant change since 2014, and we're proud to say they have embraced the new challenges and have looked forward with enthusiasm and opportunity.

We wanted to take the opportunity to discuss a few of the biggest transitions and changes impacting our members.

New Year, New Look

On Jan. 1, we became a new co-op—FreeState Electric Cooperative. It was a long road from alliance to consolidation for our employees, as well as our members. Not only did

we get a new logo and name, but we also doubled our coverage area.

We changed the way our bill looked and adjusted the billing dates to get all our members onto the same cycle. We now assess penalties on the sixth of the month. Disconnecting accounts for non-payment will occur during the last week of the month. If your account is ever in danger of being disconnected, you will receive an automated phone call prior to disconnection. This billing adjustment provides more consistency for our members, as well as our member service representatives.

We understand the change was difficult for some, but what has not changed are our employees, management and board members. We are still committed to our members and the communities we serve.

Charitable Giving

We have always been generous to our community organizations, but as FreeState Electric we want to go beyond providing—we want to be on the ground level of development. We are passionately committed to providing resources for our nine-county service area in economic development on the county level, as well as providing resources for our rural communities.

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Meet FreeState Electric Co-op's 2017 Youth Tour Winners

FreeState Electric is sponsoring four local high school students to participate in the 2017 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. Winners were selected based on their application and essay on the topic of cooperative engagement.

During the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, students will join 1,700 youth from across the nation



Mia Bond

MIA BOND is a junior at Tonganoxie High School where she is involved in cross country, track and field, and basketball. Last year, Mia competed at the AAU Junior Nationals (track and field) in Houston, Texas. Mia volunteers with the Sacred Heart Youth group and the Good Shepard Thrift Store in Tonganoxie. She has also served as a page for Representative Jim Karelskint.

Running and being active is important to Mia. She also enjoys working with her church youth group, and various community service projects. She believes in spending time with family and helping everyone achieve goals and find successes in the classroom and in athletics.

Mia will represent FreeState Electric Cooperative at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

An excerpt from Mia's essay about co-op engagement:

The members are fortunate to have a system in place that has taken over 70 years to develop. To me, development not only

in Washington, D.C. They will see the monuments and other attractions, as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government works.

At Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, students will join youth from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Campers will form a mock "candy cooperative," learn about leadership and also learn about the co-op industry.

means putting up power lines, but also putting together an organization that has the capability to run a distribution system with employees ranging from those having college degrees, to those with trade certificates, and those that are just starting in the business at an entry level. Each of these employees has the responsibility to keep the system working, from managing the entire co-op to doing all the tasks necessary to give the members the electricity to fill their needs.

As a young member, I can see how some students may feel distant from FreeState. I feel blessed that I have been surrounded by those that have taken an interest and lived the cooperative way. Fortunately, there are ways to help that problem. I think it would be a great idea for the cooperative to invite high school classes in our area to take a tour of the FreeState Electric Cooperative headquarters. These types of visits could show the young members what it takes to run a cooperative and the various jobs that are involved. The students could also meet and network with those employees for future endeavors and ideas. These types of field trips could take place a couple times per year.

I feel fortunate that I can be a leader for other youth in my area. Understanding what a successful cooperative can do for the community gives me hope for our future.

electricity did not exist in rural areas, there was a call to the people for change. Today, our generation is getting a new call; to use cooperation to empower and inspire us to take care of our community and each other.

An essential part of getting members to care is to explain to them why they should. Since each member owns a small part of the business, the cooperatives need to keep them updated about the current situation and how they play a role in the functionality of the business. If the members are aware of their impact, they would likely be more open-minded and willing to put more time and effort into their role.



Megan Ernzen

MEGAN ERNZEN is a junior at Lansing High School where she is involved in Student Council, National Honor Society and varsity basketball. She is also a member of Boling 4-H Club. Her many years in 4-H has taught her to appreciate working with animals. She also enjoys planning and organizing events, and volunteer work.

Megan will represent FreeState Electric Cooperative at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

An excerpt from Megan's essay on the topic of cooperative engagement:

In a world of constant change, these co-ops aim to fulfill the changing demands of our society. In America's Electric Cooperative's mission, it states, "today co-ops bring that same spirit of purpose and cooperation to the changing needs of a new generation of cooperative owners." In the days where



Sierra Staatz

SIERRA STAATZ is a junior at Tonganoxie High School and is involved in Science Olympiad, debate, scholars bowl, forensics, math relays, and is also on the cross country and power lifting team.

She enjoys participating in school activities because there are many different options to choose from. Sierra is talented in the areas of math and science and she hopes to pursue a future career in the engineering field.

Sierra will represent FreeState Electric Cooperative at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

An excerpt from Sierra's essay on the topic of cooperative engagement:

While being a leader is thrilling, the younger generation may still lack wisdom in specific categories, including electric cooperatives. The best solution? A mentor. According to the 2014 Gallup Poll, "72 percent would like to be their own boss. But if they do have to work for a boss, 79 percent of them would want that boss to serve more as a mentor." A mentor, rather than a boss, is someone an individual may learn from without the pressure of doing or saying something incorrectly. The first eighteen years of life are spent with

peers, such as classmates, or they know it is alright to come into scenarios with a learning, growth mindset. Qualities of mentors include the willingness to share knowledge and exhibit enthusiasm in the field. These mentors answer inquiries while asking thought-provoking questions. Before becoming a leader one must observe a leader's perspective toward the world and actions toward others.

Mentors can be encouraging and good consultants, but co-workers are another essential piece of the puzzle. People determine the environment of the workplace. I've seen the situation first-hand. An original group for a school project contained only a few energetic and motivated workers. The result was an average project. A year later, a newer assembly came together that picked specific people in school to recruit, claiming they were motivated and needed for the project. Combining a sense of purpose to solve a problem and an energetic community lead to motivated, intriguing group that accomplished more than expected.

With knowledge that younger generations want to be appreciated and useful, the next step is producing this information to the public. Promoting advertisements or articles about a current problem not only brings a sense of opportunity but may almost be informative. The most productive workers are those who believe in the company and its purpose. Therefore, cooperatives should get the message out not only about how good these organizations are, but how they are essential to a progressive world. Simple actions such as these may promote the board of directors to future leaders.

ALLISON WILLIAMS is a junior at Tonganoxie High School. She is involved in Science Olympiad and science club. She is the Ecoteam team captain, and a team captain in bowling and volleyball.

She enjoys reading science fiction and historical fiction, watching Netflix, and going for drives. She also enjoys researching all of the topics in Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start The Fire."

Allison will represent FreeState Electric Cooperative at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

An excerpt from Allison's essay on the topic of cooperative engagement:

Many generations have grown in the era of electricity but so far, only my generation has grown in the era of technology. Technology is integrated into our daily lives and is part of our routine. We often use technology more than anything else. One of the largest ways to get attention of my generation is to reach them through technology. Posing open-ended questions such as, "what would your life be like without electricity," helps this generation to see that many things have been taken for granted since we've been alive.

My generation is already painfully aware that many things are expected of life that we don't have access to. Simon Sinek

explained what's known as The Millennial Paradox, where my generation is told that we can do anything when we are young and then we are struck by confusion when we are simply average when we travel into the world. Giving my generation the opportunity to be a part of something huge is a surefire way to help my peers understand their own importance and will give them confidence in the company they are working for. Then starts the chain reaction. These workers share their knowledge that they've learned about energy to those they spend time with and since you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with according to social psychologist, Amy Cuddy, during a TEDtalk, they will continue to become more knowledgeable about energy and electricity. It will spread like the cure to a rampant disease and energy will once again be valued above all else. This action all begins when given an opportunity to be a part of something bigger than ourselves and to be important.



Allison Williams

Opt-Out Options for Operation Round-Up

FreeState Electric Cooperative members are automatically enrolled in the Operation Round-Up program. However, you have the option to opt out of this charitable giving program. No members will be forced to contribute.

FreeState Electric launched this program to assist local communities, organizations and projects across our service territories.

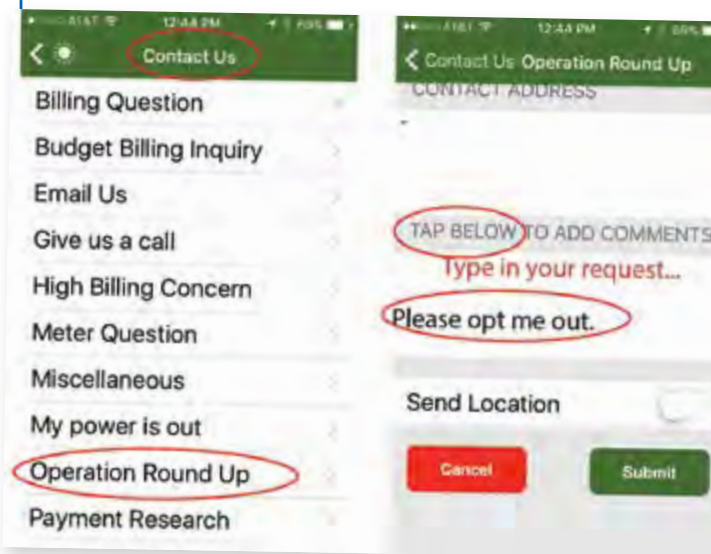
If you wish to opt out of the program, you can do so by calling 800-794-1989, visiting the Topeka or McLouth cooperative offices or logging on to your SmartHub account. Please indicate if you are opting out for multiple accounts. Upon opting out, we will withdraw you from the program and adjust the cents rounded up on your current month's bill. No questions asked. No sales pitch.

To opt out of Operation Round-Up on SmartHub, login to your SmartHub account on your desktop or mobile device and follow the steps at right and below.

If you have questions about the program, we'd be happy to talk to you about the positive impacts it will have on our communities.

Opt Out Using the SmartHub Mobile App

- ▶ Open the SmartHub mobile app
- ▶ Select "Operation Round Up" under the "Contact Us" tab.
- ▶ Tap below and type your request to opt out of Operation Round-Up.
- ▶ Click "Submit."



Opt Out at www.freestate.coop

- ▶ Go to www.freestate.coop
- ▶ Login to your SmartHub account
- ▶ Select "Round Up" under the "Billing & Payments" tab.
- ▶ Click "Unenroll."
- ▶ Fill out the Opt Out of Operation Round-Up Form.
- ▶ Click "Submit."

