

Take Control of Your Utility Bill this Winter

Kansas electric co-ops are not regulated by the Kansas Corporation Commission and therefore are responsible for establishing seasonal rules appropriate for their own co-op. FreeState Electric does not participate in the KCC's Cold Weather Rule that restricts electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31, or when temperatures are forecast to be 35 degrees or below. Therefore, all delinquent accounts are subject to disconnection as temperatures during these dates are not a governing factor in disconnection for non-payment.

To help manage your account, try FreeState's SmartHub app or Pre-Pay Program. SmartHub tracks your energy use over time, which can help you take steps to reduce your consumption and lower your bill. The Pre-Pay Program gives you the flexibility to make payment more frequently in smaller increments to help avoid falling behind on monthly bills and fees associated with non-payment.

If you have questions regarding billing, please call us at 800-794-1989.

Why Your Bill Might Fluctuate *Continued from page 16-A*

to cool their home.

If we have a mild summer with moderate temperatures, PCA can remain lower, but if we see temperatures become a moving target, PCA can fluctuate quite a bit.

As a distribution cooperative, we don't generate our power. We purchase power from our generation and transmission (G&T) power suppliers, Westar and KEPCo, to provide you with reliable service. The type of power we buy can also impact the PCA, which is why it is important that our G&Ts have a diverse power production portfolio. For example, power production options include renewable power, coal power, nuclear power and hydropower.

Keep in mind, a portion of the cost to purchase power for you, our member, is included in your kWh rate, but because the market is volatile using PCA helps us make up any differences in those costs when buying wholesale power from

Westar or KEPCo. The usage charges on your bill for electricity is exact. We are not-for-profit, so we do not profit from the sale of electricity.

You might wonder if the cooperative doesn't make a profit, then how do we operate? Each month you see an electric service charge on your bill. It doesn't change month to month. This fee paid by members assists the cooperative with operating and material purchasing costs.

We collect this fee to help pay for wire, poles, other infrastructure, employees, and the cost to run the facilities day-to-day. As a cooperative, we do our best to maintain costs and keep our expenses low to increase our margins. Those margins are returned to our members as capital credits.

If you have any questions, about the content in *Kansas Country Living* we encourage you to give us a call at 800-794-1989 or email customerservice@freestate.coop.



FreeState ENERGY EXPLORERS

Autumn Crossword Puzzle

Autumn is finally here! Complete the crossword puzzle below by filling in the Autumn words that fit the clues. If you need help, use the word bank at the bottom of the page.

ACROSS

- Fruit you bob for.
- This is a fun outing that usually takes place in autumn and can be enjoyed from a wagon, truck or trailer—as long as it's filled with hay.
- These are orange and can be carved to decorate your home during Halloween.
- These change colors during autumn months.

DOWN

- These fall from oak trees and squirrels love to collect them.
- This is what most people eat on Thanksgiving Day.

Word Bank

APPLE
TURKEY
LEAVES
PUMPKIN
HAYRIDE
APPLE
TURKEY
ACORNS

Mark Your Calendars for Annual Quilt Show Dec. 2

The Kansas Prairie Quilters of Oskaloosa are hosting their third annual quilt show on Sat., Dec. 2, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Oskaloosa School Library.

The group started in 1997 with 10 to 15 women who wanted to make a difference throughout Jefferson County. The women meet once a month at the Presbyterian Church in Oskaloosa and pay yearly dues of \$20, which is applied toward community service events. The group also creates homemade items such as pot holders, quilts, pillows and more to be donated to a variety of organizations throughout Jefferson County, like God's Storehouse, Hospice and The American Cancer Society.

"We have fun working together to help others in our communities. It

makes us feel good to know we are making a difference in others' lives," said Janet Shirely, the Kansas Prairie Quilters advertising chair.

The Kansas Prairie Quilt Show is one of their biggest events, bringing in about 75 locals. At the event, they will raffle off a handmade quilt made by the group, "No Two Alike." All proceeds of the raffle ticket sales will be used to support the numerous non-profit organizations in Jefferson County.

Raffle tickets are \$5 for six tickets or \$1 for one ticket and can be purchased from group members or at the show. Other boutique vendors and homemade items also will be available for purchase from local vendors. For more information, email amongpals@aol.com.



The opportunity quilt, "No Two Alike," was made by a group of women in the organization. It will be raffled off to raise money for those in need in their community at the quilt show.

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

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| East District
P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS
66054-0070 | West District
1100 SW Auburn Rd
Topeka, KS 66615 |
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East & West District Office Hours:
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tip of the Month

Spending more time in the kitchen during the holiday season? Here's one way to be more energy efficient: Unplug small kitchen appliances, like toaster ovens and microwaves, when not in use. You could save \$10 to \$20 per year.

FROM THE CEO Why Your Bill Might Fluctuate



Steve Foss

One question the cooperative gets quite frequently is, "why is my bill never consistent?" or "why have my rates increased this month?" FreeState

Electric's kilowatt hour rate has not increased since 2010 (East District) and 2012 (West District). The changes you see on your bill are due to the power cost adjustment (PCA). It can fluctuate depending on the season, demand and consumption.

Wholesale power costs cause fluctuation. When the wholesale cost of power is higher or lower than it was when FreeState Electric last conducted a rate study, those differences show in the PCA.

PCA may fluctuate depending on our demand charges. Demand is the maximum amount of electrical energy consumed at a given time. Suppliers bill us for both the highest demand set during the month and our coincidental demand.

Power Cost Adjustment can fluctuate depending on the season, demand and consumption.

Why does the temperature matter? Weather can have a real impact on your electric bill. Residential accounts see the most fluctuation due to heating and cooling, but the winter months are not necessarily comparable to summer months. Why? Because heating your home in the winter isn't always electricity driven because you have options, but most everyone uses electricity

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9th Annual Health Fair & Member Appreciation Day

Approximately 200 members attended FreeState Electric Co-operative's ninth Annual Community Health Fair and Member Appreciation Day on Sept. 26 in McLouth.

With more than 25 businesses, organizations and governmental entities participating, area residents and FreeState Electric members had the opportunity to speak with vendors and get information regarding their mental, physical and financial health. Attendees also enjoyed a meal provided by Ross's Catering.

"This event is just one way we hope to help our members and the communities we serve," said Steve Foss, chief executive officer. "Events like these not only provide valuable information to our members, but serve the community by getting local organizations together to bring awareness to several services, programs and opportunities the area provides."

FreeState Electric also collected donations for their Cooperative Soap Drive. All donations will be divided and given to area food pantries to help those in need throughout our communities. FreeState Electric will continue accepting soap donations until Oct. 30 at both district office locations.



Representatives from Holland Eye Clinic in Oskaloosa inform members about healthy eye practices, vision consults and all other services provided.

Participating Local Organizations

- ▶ Sam's Club- Legends
- ▶ Audiologist
- ▶ First State Bank and Trust
- ▶ United County Heart of America Real Estate and Action
- ▶ The Willow Domestic Violence Center
- ▶ The Good Shepard
- ▶ Taylor Insurance Services, LLC
- ▶ Holland Eye Clinic
- ▶ F.W. Huston Medical Center
- ▶ Integrated Behavioral Technologies
- ▶ Bright Smiles LLC
- ▶ God's Storehouse
- ▶ Midland Care Connection
- ▶ Accomplished Health and Wellness
- ▶ Therapy Works
- ▶ Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
- ▶ Lawrence Memorial Hospital Community Education
- ▶ McLouth Medical Clinic
- ▶ Bank of McLouth
- ▶ Physical Therapy Solutions
- ▶ The Sexual Trauma and Abuse Care Center
- ▶ McLouth Fire Department
- ▶ Jefferson County Humane Society
- ▶ Jefferson County Friends of Hospice
- ▶ Jefferson County Health Department
- ▶ Phillips Insurance
- ▶ NEK-CAP Inc.
- ▶ Fawn Delk with Monat



Members of all ages learn about energy consumption with hands-on interactive energy modules.



Don Montgomery, FreeState board of trustee secretary, speaks with Sergeant Clay McHardie with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department about the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program he facilitates in county schools.



This month, we recognize Veterans Day—a time to honor our troops, past and present. While one day is dedicated to celebrating them, many throughout the United States honor them every day. One example is your local cooperative.

Electric co-ops have long had an affinity for veterans. Perhaps because they both focus on service, mission and country. Maybe it's because a disproportionate number of veterans come from rural communities and return to their hometowns following active duty. Or, maybe it's due to the shared work ethic of teamwork, cooperation and a "get it done" attitude. Most likely, it is all of the above.

In 2015, Sergeant **NOAH SCHRECK** began his four-year journeyman lineman apprenticeship through FreeState Electric Cooperative's Merchant Program. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) approved FreeState Electric's Merchant Program, and in January 2017, the cooperative began offering the program as a way to help former military employees increase their monthly income while completing their four-year apprenticeship.

Originally from Ohio, Schreck enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2006 and spent two years as an Army interrogator and two years as a military policeman. Although he was stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; and Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, it was his time at Fort Riley, Kansas, that determined his future.

"I was stationed at Fort Riley when I met my wife Lacy," said Schreck. "I noticed her photo in the office of

my primary physician, her mother, and things fell into place from there."

Not long after, they married and moved back to Kansas after four years in the Army.

"At first, I worked at Midland Exterior until a friend in the lineman apprentice program suggested I pursue lineman school. So I decided to attend the Manhattan Area Technical College (MATC)."

Schreck graduated from MATC in 2014 and found a journeyman lineman apprentice opening close to where his wife taught.

"I found the position with FreeState Electric (formerly Kaw Valley Electric) in a job search and luckily got the position and began my apprenticeship in 2015."

What drew Schreck to FreeState was the veteran's benefits that were offered by the cooperative during his four years of on-the-job training (OJT) required by the position.

"Not only does the program motivate me to get my workbook and hours done, it allows me to continue doing what I love—working with our members. The extra benefits make it even more rewarding."

To be eligible for the Merchant program, veterans must meet the criteria of one of the following VA bills:

▶ **Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (Chapter 30)** – Honorably discharged veterans who entered active duty after July 1, 1985, and participated in the pay reduction program. Also, certain individuals having Vietnam Era GI Bill eligibility who meet certain criteria may be eligible for the Chapter 30 program after Dec. 31, 1989.

▶ **Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves (Chapter 1606 and 1607 (REAP))** – Reservists or National Guard members, who enlisted, re-enlisted or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve or National Guard for

a period of six years after Oct. 1, 1990. Chapter 1607 is payable if reservist meets consecutive active duty wartime service.

▶ **Dependents Education Assistance Program (Chapter 35)** – A child or spouse of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability or has a total disability permanent in nature as a result from a service-connected disability.

▶ **Veterans Education Assistance Program (Chapter 32)** – Those entering active duty between January 1977 and June 30, 1985, and contributed toward the VEAP benefit.

Schreck was eligible for benefits through the Montgomery GI Bill of Active Duty (Chapter 30). He is currently in his third year of apprenticeship and said working at FreeState has been the best job he has had.

"It's a very tight-knit family here," said Schreck. "My wife and I are grateful to be a part of a great community where we can raise our kids."

As part of the seven principles cooperatives are founded upon, FreeState Electric strives to provide great service and environments for our members and employees. FreeState Electric is proud to be able to hold true to these standards while being able to support our troops. Thank you to all who serve—past, present and future.



From left: Bryce Best, Journeyman Lineman, Noah Schreck, Journeyman Lineman Apprentice 3, and Brooks Vaughn Journeyman Lineman Crew Foreman, set polls for new service.