

Surely they must feel some delight, knowing they helped turn darkness into light.

PAUL HARVEY, THE LINEMAN



ELECTRIC CO-OPS COMMIT
Co-op Month 2017



Partnerships Lighten the Load

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- ▶ We have worked with our statewide cooperative (KEC) to lobby against initiatives that would ultimately impact our members' bottom line.
- ▶ We've supported local schools, groups and organizations with several area initiatives through sponsorships and donations.
- ▶ We've launched Operation Round-Up to assist in efforts across the entire FreeState service territory.

Not only do we provide electricity, we provide valuable resources that help our local communities function and thrive. Are you ready to get involved? Attend our annual meeting in April contact us to let us know what issues are important to you. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to engage and find out more information about your cooperative and the initiatives we support on behalf of all of you. Help us stand up for your communities and their right to affordable, safe, and reliable electricity. We want to work together.

This October as we recognize National Cooperative Month, here at FreeState we thank you for your efforts to strengthen your communities. We want you to continue to stay involved with us as we look to build a bright future together. FreeState Electric Cooperative is member-owned, and we are member driven.

Find out more about YOUR cooperative at www.freestate.coop.

FreeState Hosts Legislators for a Co-ops Vote Tour



Above: Steve Foss took legislative visitors on a tour of the FreeState West District office, and facility. Below: Legislators tried on gloves and other protective equipment while at FreeState.

Local legislators joined key staff from FreeState Electric Cooperative and KEPCo on Sept. 19 as part of the Co-ops Vote Legislative Connections Tour.

"The Co-ops Vote Legislative Connections Tour is all about outreach and connections with our legislators," said Steve Foss, CEO. "It's crucial to constantly build relationships with our lawmakers and help them to understand why cooperatives are different."

Attending the event were: **REP. KEN CORBET**, District 54; **REP. WILLIE DOVE**, District 38; **REP. FRED PATTON**, District 50; **REP. VIC MILLER**, District 58; **REP. JIM GARTNER**, District 53; and **SEN. MARCI FRANCISCO**, District 2.

"We were delighted that these legislators were able to attend," said Foss.

As part of the event, the legislators were shown FreeState's new educational solar array at the Topeka office, toured the building, and learned more about the protective equipment the cooperative linemen must use.



From left: Marcus Harris, KEPCo CEO, Steve Foss, FEC CEO, Rep. Ken Corbet, Rep. Willie Dove, Rep. Fred Patton for Kansas, Rep. Jim Gartner, Sen. Marci Francisco, Rep. Vic Miller.



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

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| East District
P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS
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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

Turn your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours and save around 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills. Using a programmable thermostat makes it easy to set it and forget it!

FROM THE CEO

Partnerships Lighten the Load



Steve Foss

October is national cooperative month. It's a chance for us to recognize and celebrate what makes us different, and why being member driven

is the best part of our jobs.

You are what makes FreeState different. We work for you. Our members. FreeState celebrates that fact every day, not just during the month of October. Our staff is dedicated to each of our members and strives to exceed your energy needs. We want to be your trusted energy partner.

If you look at our history, you'll see that partnerships have gotten us to where we are today. A little less than 80 years ago our service territory was in the dark, literally. The glitz and glamour of the big cities and urban areas were calling, but out here beyond those city lights we were in the dark, and we needed something

to light a path toward better times. However, instead of waiting on someone to come fix it, we took initiative. We fixed it ourselves. Folks

relied on partnerships and cooperation to form our own utility. By working together, they found a way to lighten the load and power the future.

It's in FreeState's genetic makeup as a not-for-profit, local, member-owned and member-governed cooperative to empower members like you to improve the quality of life right here at home. Just like they did 80 years ago.

How has FreeState improved the quality of life so far?

- ▶ We provide safe, reliable, and affordable power to more than 14,000 in northeast Kansas.
- ▶ We've reached out to local economic development groups to offer information about federal Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant programs.
- ▶ We've sponsored four area youth in expanding and developing their leadership skills in Washington, D.C., and Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

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FreeState Hosts Energy Fair on Oct. 24

Join Us from 4 to 7 p.m. at FreeState's West Office in Topeka

FreeState Electric Cooperative will host our first Energy Fair and Member Appreciation Day on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2017, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the FreeState West office at 1100 SW Auburn Road in Topeka. The event will also include a community soap drive to assist multiple food pantries across the area.

This event is open to FreeState members and area community members. Local businesses will be on hand to distribute information regarding solar energy, home efficiency and energy conservation.

There is no charge to attend this event, but members are encouraged to bring new soap items to donate or make a cash donation to the Cooperative Soap Drive.

Community involvement is the cooperative difference at work. Your co-op needs your help. No donation is too small. Items collected will be given to area food pantries, which serve those who need assistance in our communities. The pantries rely on donors, volunteers and drives like this to stock their shelves and operate. Families or individuals can stop in and get food to eat, but often are also in need of personal care items.

Donations can be dropped off from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at our offices in Topeka and McLouth.

Below is a list of items we are accepting for the drive:

- ▶ Liquid soap (hand and body)
- ▶ Bar soap



Local businesses will be on hand Oct. 24 to provide FreeState members with the latest information on solar energy, home efficiency, and energy conservation.

- ▶ Shampoo
- ▶ Laundry detergent
- ▶ Dish soap
- ▶ Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- ▶ Other personal care items

For more information about the event visit www.freestate.coop, contact Sarah Farlee at sarah.farlee@freestate.coop or call 800-796-1989.

Make a Donation to the FreeState Electric Cooperative Soap Drive

Your cooperative needs your help! We are collecting soap, shampoo, laundry detergent, and other personal care items from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31.

Bring your items to the health fair, or drop them off at either cooperative office!

Items Needed

- ▶ LIQUID SOAP (HAND AND BODY)
- ▶ BAR SOAP
- ▶ SHAMPOO
- ▶ LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- ▶ DISH SOAP
- ▶ TOOTHBRUSHES AND TOOTHPASTE
- ▶ OTHER PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

Linemen Participate in Advanced Training to Better Serve Members

Member owned. Member driven. This tagline used by FreeState Electric Cooperative sets the tone for the cooperative's stance to service and dedication. It was the electric cooperatives' commitment to providing exceptional service to member-owners, that the Merchant Job and Safety Training (MJST) program was created.

Dennis Merchant, founder of the MJST program, started working for the Mitchell Vocational Technical School in Brookings, South Dakota to develop a new power lineman-training program at their campus. For 15 years he worked to develop this program while teaching in the classroom where he learned which methods were effective, and those that were not.

In 1984, Merchant was approached by managers from South Dakota Rural Electric to create a training program for their cooperative. Spending his nights and weekends he wrote a program that would eventually become the standard in the electric co-operative industry. By 1989, more than 600 apprentices enrolled in the program.

Before too long, Kaw Valley (now FreeState), began thinking about adding intensive apprentice training at the cooperative. FreeState's Assistant General Manager, **RANDY RICHARDS**, began his career with Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative in December 1980 as an apprentice. After nine years in the line department, Richards became the Purchasing Inventory and Safety Director where



Britton Anderson, a level 4 apprentice lineman, operates a bucket truck as part of his on-the-job training through the MJST program.

he helped oversee the apprentice training program.

"Most apprentices start out at a technical school such as Manhattan Technical for a year with a summer on-the-job training period. They get the basic knowledge and understanding of climbing poles and use of equipment before starting an apprenticeship at an electric company," Richards said.

"I created tests for something to fall back on for a while. Then I got to talking to Dennis, and we thought it was a good opportunity for us moving forward to adopt the Merchant Program."

MJST is a four-year program consisting of four workbooks, which offer four levels of independent studies and include tests at each

level. An apprentice must complete and pass an exam while completing 2,080 hours of on-the-job training each year.

"The more advanced they get in the program, the more advanced their schooling is—from learning how to drill holes to trig-onometry," Richards said.

Apprentices are promoted every six months, provided they have completed the required bookwork and hours. With each promotion comes new responsibilities.

Upon completion of the final MJST course of study and on-the-job training hours, an apprentice earns the classification as a journeyman lineman.

The program requires apprentices be taught proper technique while gaining critical knowledge to perform the job of a line-man.

"They start you slow at first when you start as a 1A apprentice," said **BRITTON ANDERSON**, an apprentice four at FreeState. "You don't get to do much because, starting out, you don't know how to do many tasks other than climbing poles and a little bookwork."

A FreeState apprentice 2A, **JORDANN MOODY**, agreed saying

hands-on teaching is the only way he learns.

"The biggest part of the program is watching and being able to observe how things are done and learning from it."

A fifth workbook or course was created by Merchant in January 2005 for those wanting to gain advanced knowledge. While this is not required, many decide to further their education.

The Meterman Program is an additional four-year program created by Merchant. A journeyman lineman who has completed the fourth year with at least an 85 percent on the final exam may enter the Meterman Program as a third-year participant.

FreeState is committed to providing the best service to our members by providing advanced training for our linemen and employees. When the power goes out, so do we—and rest assured you have the best on the line. Are you, or someone you know interested in becoming a lineman? We're happy to help! Contact our line department and find out what it takes and how you can start a career on the line.

Learn More About the Merchant Job and Safety Training (MJST) Apprentice Levels

Apprentice 1

An apprentice begins the first MJST book and may perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system. The apprentice 1 is permitted to work on an energized security light pole under direct supervision of a journeyman lineman, lead journeyman or a line foreman. An apprentice 1 is limited to a security light pole only.

Apprentice 1A

They can perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system while working to complete the MJST book one. They may also work on energized poles of 240 volts or below and install 120/240 volt meters at an energized service under the direct supervision of a journeyman lineman, lead journeyman or a line foreman.

Apprentice 2

The second year, they begin book two, and may perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system. They may perform all work on energized poles with positioning devices, such as a belt or bucket, below the neutral conductor when directly supervised by a journeyman lineman, lead journeyman or line foreman.

Apprentice 2A

Working to complete book two, an apprentice 2A may perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system. They may also install 120/240 meters at an energized service and all 240 volts and below energized poles without direct supervision of a journeyman lineman, lead journeyman or line foreman.

Apprentice 3

In their third year, they begin the third book and may perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system. Under the direct supervision of a journeyman lineman, lead journeyman or a line foreman, they may perform maintenance and construction on energized overhead and underground portions of the system.

Apprentice 3A

An apprentice 3A may perform all required construction and maintenance on non-energized portions of the system and work on energized poles with a belt or bucket below neutral without direct supervision. An apprentice 3A will complete book three in the MJST program.

Apprentice 4

The last level of the MJST apprentice program. An apprentice 4 will complete book four and may perform all required construction and maintenance on energized and non-energized portions of the system without the direct supervision of a lineman journeyman, lead journeyman, or line foreman.



WES HOLTHAUS
FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 1

GRANT WALKER

FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 1A



JORDANN MOODY
FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 2A

NOAH SHRECK

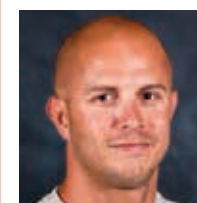
FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 3



BRITTON ANDERSON
FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 4

BRAD HEIDMEN

FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 4



BRYCE SHAVER
FreeState Apprentice Lineman Level 4

LINEMAN APPRENTICES