



**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Outlet

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Board of Trustees

Larry Butel
Overbrook

Don Montgomery
Burlingame

Bill Conley
Delia

Jeanine Murphy
Leavenworth

Rob Sage
Maple Hill

Ralph Phillips
Mayetta

Matthew Turecek
Valley Falls

Mark Wulfkuhle
Berryton

Harlan Hunt
Meriden

Jacob Pugh
Attorney

Staff

Steve Foss
Chief Executive Officer

Christopher Parr
Assistant General Manager

Randy Richards
Assistant General Manager

District Offices

McLouth Office

P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS 66054-0070

Topeka Office

1100 SW Auburn Rd
Topeka, KS 66615

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Operations Notice

FreeState has hired contractors (IES Commercial, Inc.) to assist with our construction work plan projects. These contractors started work Oct. 1 and will continue throughout 2019. If you have questions, please contact the office.

FROM THE CEO

2019: Another Successful Year Ends

At the end of the year I reflect on the accomplishments FreeState has achieved. Our employees work hard to make members a priority while keeping tabs on industry changes and challenges. I thought I'd share with you four of our most significant accomplishments this year.

Annual Meeting

We had an incredible turnout this year in Perry. We had members from all corners of our service territory come to Perry-Lecompton High School to be a part of what makes the cooperative unique – democratic control. We held a trustee election, discussed cooperative business, and once again shared the financial stability and success consolidation has had for our members.

Investing in Infrastructure and Generation

FreeState invested in large industrial generators at the Lakewood Hills and Oskaloosa substations. The purpose of the large investment was to save money through peak demand management. Why? Because generation of our own power during peak demand reduces the amount of energy purchased for members, and that means saving money on the wholesale cost of electricity.

The co-op also saw a hefty influx of capital from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), providing essential cash flow for

maintenance and construction of infrastructure that will enhance reliability, safety, and affordability. The \$14.9 million loan is part of a program that provides low-interest funding while standardizing rural engineering and environmental requirements.

The investment from RUS, will be used to build 82 miles of line and upgrade 134 miles of line along with other system improvements across the service territory. The loan amount also includes \$130,000 for technology upgrades.

Returning Money to Members and Retiring Capital Credits

Our most significant accomplishment was giving back excess savings to our members in the form of a consolidation savings adjustment.

We gave back \$400,000 in realized savings all due to the consolidation, and we continue to save our members money. I want to recognize the FreeState



Steve Foss

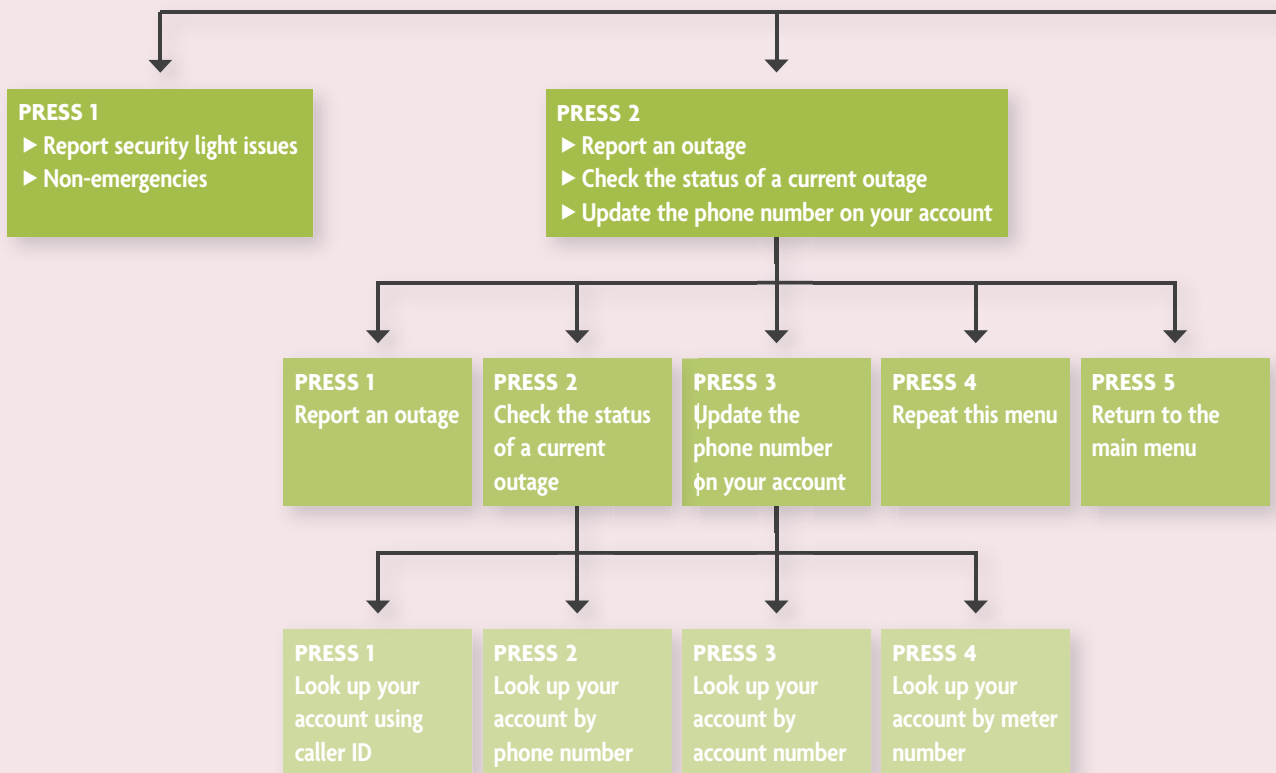
“As we continue to move forward, we know that it takes much more than electricity to power our members.”

Continued on page 16H ►



McLouth Member Account Coordinator Amanda Holloway speaks with a consumer-member using the new phone system. The new system is more reliable, member friendly and will reduce overall costs.

Ring CENTRAL



New phone system increases reliability and efficiency

In November, FreeState Electric Cooperative installed a new phone system (Ring Central) to improve reliability, flexibility and emergency preparedness and offer enhanced features allowing us to better serve you.

To access FreeState's full menu of options call 800-794-1989. Use the guide below to navigate FreeState's member-friendly automated menu options and find the prompt best suited for your needs. **PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE PROMPTS.**

Ring Central has offered flexibility for our staff, who often work in the field, to set up critical business operations outside of the office in the event of an emergency; increased reliability by ensuring consumer-members no longer receive a busy signal; and enhanced the features available to our consumer-members.

"Our priority is our member," said Brent Edgecomb, manager of information technology. "We have been looking at ways

to avoid phone provider outages and other issues. Switching to a new provider who is also very familiar with cooperatives, we hope we can create increased reliability to members, and efficiency with employees."

Edgecomb says the menu has not changed, but the provider side of the equation has already seen improvements.

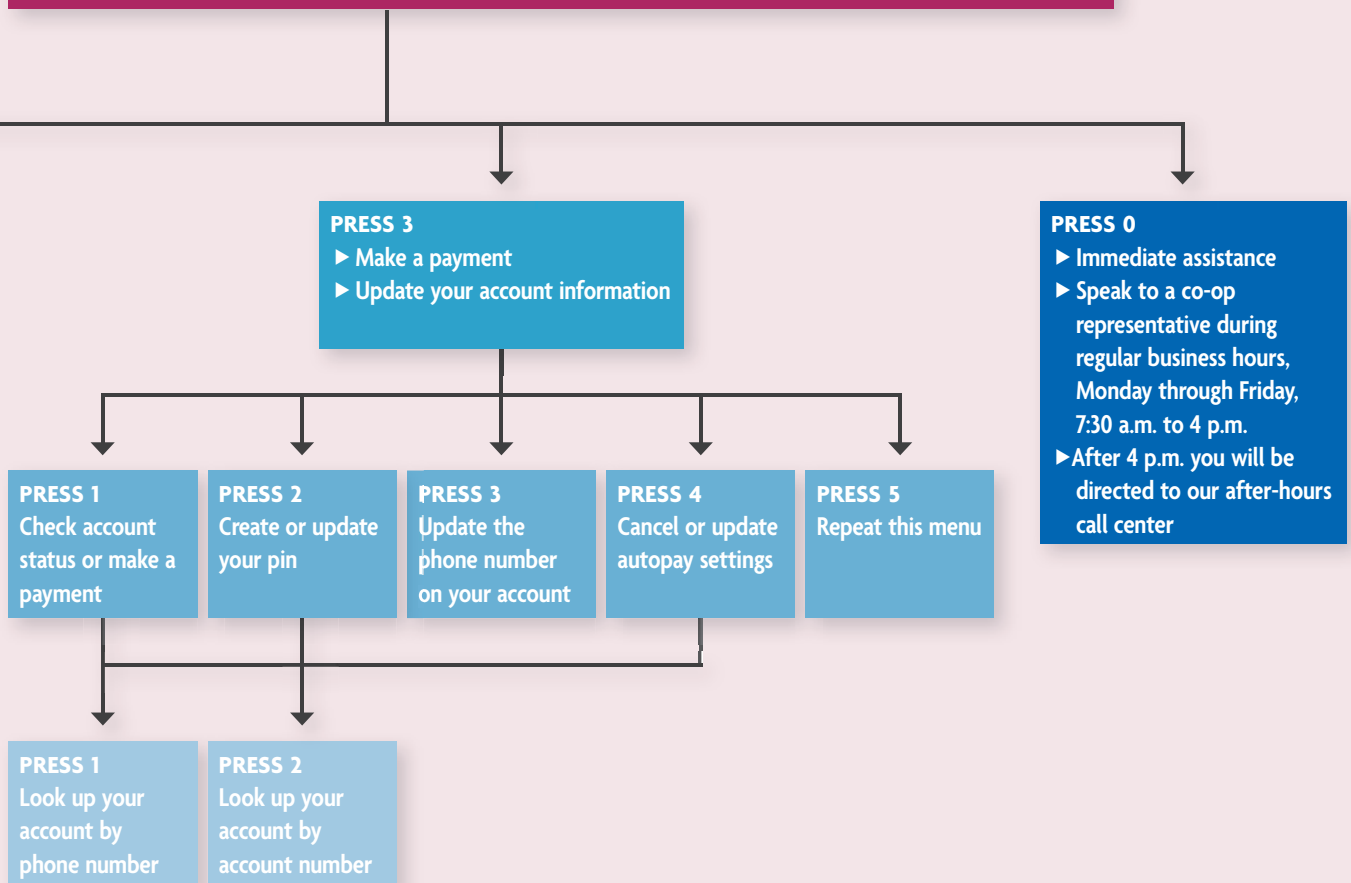
"The new phone provider is familiar with our operations systems on the line side and that helps us because they know and understand the importance of being operable even in the event of something going wrong."

Edgecomb also added that redundancy in the provider's systems is designed to decrease the likelihood of a telephone provider outage.

"We ultimately prepare for a worst-case scenario, so having built-in duplications for the systems gives us increased reliability, which is what our members expect," he said.

MENU OPTIONS

CALL FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE AT 800-794-1989



New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub.

Paying your monthly FreeState bill should be simple and easy.

Managing your account and service with FreeState just got a little easier with the new updates and mobile app enhancements from SmartHub. The latest updates will be available this fall. SmartHub is FreeState's innovative resource for account management, and it can do more than you think. It can help you take control and manage your FreeState account like never before, giving you more time to focus on other responsibilities.

If you are a current user, you'll notice the mobile app will have a fresh, new look. When you open the app, you'll be

able to see your usage analysis up front or you can contact us with the click of a button right from the home screen.

Outage and billing alerts are also displayed on the home screen, making it easy for us to communicate important information with you. Billing, payment and other features are available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

All of the features you currently love about SmartHub will still be available, just with a refreshed look and an enhanced user experience.

If you haven't been using SmartHub, check it out today. Whether through the web, your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, view your usage, contact member service representatives and get the latest news.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment either through the web or through your mobile device, you will be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks.

FreeState will also have important notifications posted, and you'll be able to choose how you want to be notified about your bill, including email and text messaging. You'll also be able to set usage thresholds so you'll know when your usage is higher than you'd like and help you keep your electricity bill as low as possible.

Reporting an outage is also quick and easy with the SmartHub mobile app. No need to call, just let us know about a service issue with a few taps. You can contact FreeState's member service representatives for requests or questions. SmartHub's contact feature makes connecting with us quick and easy.

Access SmartHub by visiting www.freestate.coop or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices).

The image shows a preview of the SmartHub mobile app interface. At the top, the word "SMARTHUB" is written in large, purple, 3D-style letters. Below this, there are four main service icons arranged in a 2x2 grid:

- Report Service Issues:** An icon of a smartphone with a speech bubble.
- Monitor Usage 24/7:** An icon of a bar chart with an upward-pointing arrow.
- View and Pay Your Bill:** An icon of a hand holding a document.
- Receive Important Updates:** An icon of a laptop with checkmarks on the screen.

At the bottom left, there is an icon of three interlocking gears with the text "Manage Your Account" below it. At the bottom right, there is the "smart hub" logo, which consists of the words "smart" and "hub" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a circular arrangement of small squares around the word "hub".

Scan this QR Code with your mobile device. It will take you directly to the SmartHub download of your corresponding app store (Apple App Store for iOS and Google Play Market for Android).



3RD ANNUAL Energy Fair & Member Appreciation

FreeState Electric Cooperative hosted their 3rd Annual Energy Fair and Member Appreciation Day on Oct. 23. The event included a soap drive to assist area food pantries with gathering personal care items.

The fair featured local vendors that provided information on products and services to promote energy savings, efficiency and renewables.



Journeyman Lineman Brad Heideman takes consumer-member Margaret Lee, age 97, on her first-ever bucket truck ride during the energy fair and member appreciation event.



Vendors promoting products and services related to energy efficiency were on hand to provide information to attendees.

Thank You Vendors!

- ▶ Attic Report Card
- ▶ Border States
- ▶ Cromwell Solar
- ▶ DH Lawn and Garden Equipment
- ▶ Ground Source, Inc.
- ▶ Good Energy Solutions
- ▶ FreeState Engineering Dept.
- ▶ Kansas Spray Foam Insulation
- ▶ Laird Noller Ford
- ▶ Scott Temperature



FreeState Board President Jeanine Murphy took her first-ever bucket truck ride with Journeyman Lineman Bryce Shaver.

Cooperative Briefs

NOW AVAILABLE!

2020 Youth Program Applications

FreeState invests in our youth with opportunities designed to reflect the realities of our society and its preference for dynamic, personal interactions. In today's professional world, employers and thought leaders want to see presenters who make a connection with the audience, while communicating their message. Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp experiences are all-expenses-paid and will truly be experiences of a lifetime for area youth.

Any high school junior living in the FreeState territory with a parent or guardian who is a consumer-member of the cooperative is eligible. **DEADLINE FOR THE 2020 PROGRAM IS MONDAY, FEB. 10, 2020.** For more information and to download an application packet visit WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/YOUTH or call the office at 800-794-1989.

Cold Weather Rule Reminder

FreeState Electric Cooperative does not participate in the Cold Weather Rule established by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), a rule which restricts electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31, when temperature forecasts are 35 degrees or below. FreeState is not mandated by this policy and has been responsible for establishing its own appropriate seasonal rules since 1996.

All accounts are subject to disconnection for nonpayment and are not governed by temperature.

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

Reminder: Office Closed

The FreeState offices will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday. We are also closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

ASK Matt

Energy Use Coordinator **MATT LAMBERT** will answer questions about energy efficiency, renewables, co-op programs, and everything in between. Email Matt your question at askmatt@freestate.coop.



Before we get to this month's question I want to let consumer-members know we have our 2020 calendar available at the cooperative offices. The 2020 calendar features 12 months of energy savings! Stop by the McLouth or Topeka office to get your free calendar or stop by the Topeka Farm Show in January and I'll have some in the co-op booth.

DEAR MATT,

I HAVE READ ABOUT CHANGING MY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TO LED. IS IT REALLY WORTH THE COST?

Switching to LED holiday lights does impact usage, and ultimately savings. Keep in mind, holiday lighting is seasonal and your savings really depends on how much you decorate and how many lights you hang.

A typical decorator may put out 10 strings of lights, and perhaps a couple of outdoor decorations (think garland or wreaths). Incandescent lights (using the formula shown at right) would equal about 600 kWh for the season or approximately \$10 per month. A switch to LED lights drops that to 100 kWh for the season and is only about \$1.50 per month. The savings are visible, but perhaps not worth replacing working incandescent lights. Consider waiting to upgrade from incandescents to LEDs when you are ready to purchase new lights to replace old ones.

If you prefer lining your roof, yard, home and trees with lights or you decorate with several outdoor decorations, the energy formula is going to look different for you. This

type of lighting usually equals around 6,000 kWh, or about \$100 per month. Switching to LED would only cost about \$15 per month. More than enough savings to justify making the switch now.

If you would like to calculate your own usage, try this formula to calculate your seasonal holiday usage:



$$\text{Watts} = \text{Total Wattage of Decor}$$

$$\text{Watts} \times 0.001 = \text{kWh}$$

$$\text{kWh} \times 5 \text{ hours per day} = \text{kWh per day}$$

$$\text{kWh} \times 30 \text{ days} = \text{kWh per season}$$

$$\text{kWh/season} \times \text{kWh price} = \text{cost to illuminate your home for the holidays}$$



Share Your Memories



Electricity delivered to rural America brought rural living into a new light. We've come a long way in 75 years.

Do you remember when the lights came on?

We want to hear your story and share it with the new generation of cooperative consumer-members.

As we talk about a new energy and the future of cooperatives, we also want to connect with our past to feature stories describing the time when the co-op brought power to the farm, ranch or rural residence.

We are asking for help from our consumer-members. Submit your stories or photos from the past that highlight when Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative or Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Cooperative brought power to your lives.

Did you live on a farm? Did you get new electric appliances? Do you remember when you were able to flip a light on for the first time in the home or barn? We want to hear about it!

How to submit your stories: drop by one of the FreeState offices, email marketing@freestate.coop or call 800-794-1989. You can mail photos, written accounts or other memorabilia to:

FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
ATTN: MARKETING
PO BOX 70
MCLOUTH, KS 66054

Any tangible memorabilia will be returned to the consumer-member. We will begin sharing these stories in January 2020. We appreciate your willingness to share the past with the new generation of cooperative consumer-members.

The Co-op Connections Corner

Each month we highlight a few local businesses where the Co-op Connections card provides a discount.

If you have questions about the card contact the office at 800-794-1989. If you'd like more information or instructions on downloading the mobile app visit our website at WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/CONNECTIONS.

▶ **BOGARD BODY AND WELDING**

17734 K16 Highway
McLouth, KS 66054

▶ **COMPLETE HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING, LLC**

18985 178th St.
Tonganoxie, KS 66086

▶ **HOBBY LOBBY**

1900 S.W. Wanamaker Rd.
Topeka, KS 66604
1801 W. 23rd St.
Lawrence, KS 66046

▶ **JEFFERSON HILL VINEYARDS AND GUEST HOUSE**

12381 Washington Rd.
McLouth, KS 66054

▶ **PERRY CARPET SHACK**

107 Elm St.
Perry, KS 66073

▶ **TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM**

201 W. Washington
Tonganoxie, KS 66086

▶ **TOWN AND COUNTRY REAL ESTATE AND AUCTION**

313 Jefferson
Oskaloosa, KS 66066

▶ **WINCHESTER HARDWARE**

12804 Wellman Rd.
Winchester, KS 66097

▶ **WORTHINGTON HARDWARE AND AUTO PARTS**

313 E. Front St.
Perry, KS 66073

THINK
LOCAL
FIRST

FROM THE CEO
2019 Review

Continued from page 16A ▶

staff who work so hard to keep costs down and spend responsibly. We were able to retire another round of capital credits because our margins were higher than we anticipated. We retired \$800,000 to both long-time members and newer members. Our hybrid system of retiring these capital credits is allowing us to benefit more members and that's what the cooperative difference is all about.

Giving Back to Communities

When it comes to concern for the community, our members have provided more than \$88,000 to 14 area programs and organizations that are making a difference in the communities we serve. We have a group of volunteer members who have given their time and talents to ensure that money collected from the Operation Round-Up program goes right back into the community. In 2019, two highlights of giving were to first responder units in McLouth and Auburn to purchase life-saving equipment.

We've also given funding to public libraries, schools and food pantries. A grant was also awarded to build a city park in Auburn.

As we highlighted last month, FreeState employees gave a sizable donation to F.W. Huston in Winchester through our CoBank Sharing Success grant program.

As we continue to move forward, we know that it takes much more than electricity to power our members. I also want to remind each of you to take a breather this holiday season and enjoy the blessings in your life.

AS ALWAYS, IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CONTACT US AT 800-794-1989 OR CUSTOMERSERVICE@FREESTATE.COOP.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

FROM THE FREESTATE COOPERATIVE FAMILY TO YOURS

- ▶ Joe Ackley
- ▶ Britton Anderson
- ▶ Darren Anderson
- ▶ Bryce Best
- ▶ Josh Bogatz
- ▶ Tanner Bristol
- ▶ Derrick Brown
- ▶ Cole Bryant
- ▶ Corey Calvert
- ▶ Jeremy Cameron
- ▶ Dustin Crotinger
- ▶ Rod Crowder
- ▶ Traci DePriest
- ▶ Brent Edgecomb
- ▶ Melanie Eichman
- ▶ Sarah Farlee
- ▶ Ron Forshee
- ▶ Steve Foss
- ▶ Kyle Fritz
- ▶ Mat Frye
- ▶ David Gechter
- ▶ Loren Goss
- ▶ Roderick Haffener
- ▶ Kyle Hallgren
- ▶ Scott Halverson
- ▶ John Hamm
- ▶ Kyle Hammer
- ▶ Brad Heideman
- ▶ Isiah Henry
- ▶ Adam Hernandez
- ▶ Paul Herring
- ▶ Amanda Holloway
- ▶ Wes Holthaus
- ▶ Jim Holwick
- ▶ Kim Howbert
- ▶ Mike Jones
- ▶ Michael Kay
- ▶ Greg Kramer
- ▶ Desiree LaForge
- ▶ Matt Lambert
- ▶ Dean Lasher
- ▶ Nolan Lewis
- ▶ John Malone
- ▶ Kim Maxton
- ▶ Danny Mehrhoff
- ▶ Michelle Meyer
- ▶ Tyler Meyer
- ▶ Jordann Moody
- ▶ Ken Ottensmeier
- ▶ Chris Parr
- ▶ Zane Peak
- ▶ Jake Pineau
- ▶ Jennifer Ping
- ▶ Mark Raines
- ▶ Chelsea Renyer
- ▶ Randy Richards
- ▶ Bobby Riedel
- ▶ Tami Rodda
- ▶ Shad Schafer
- ▶ Justin Seele
- ▶ Bryce Shaver
- ▶ Scott Shepherd
- ▶ Tim Smoots
- ▶ Paula Spreer
- ▶ Zach Sterling
- ▶ Jill Taggart
- ▶ Brooks Vaughn
- ▶ Randy Wager
- ▶ Grant Walker
- ▶ Jeff Werner
- ▶ Mitch West
- ▶ Kasey Whitaker
- ▶ Gary Willits
- ▶ Scott Wright
- ▶ Eric Wylie