



**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.

Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: energy.gov

FROM THE CEO

We Are Your Cooperative

OCTOBER IS COOPERATIVE MONTH, and I am taking this opportunity to talk about how unique it is to be part of an electric cooperative.

Generations before us were a part of something extraordinary and ground-breaking. Decades ago they gathered to solve the problem of getting electricity to places investor-owned utilities weren't interested in serving. They invested in forming a distribution cooperative they had part ownership of, and it empowered them to make living in rural Kansas just a little bit easier.

FreeState is not-for-profit. When we make more money than we need to serve our purpose, it goes right back to our members in the form of capital credits. Instead of profits in shareholders' pockets, we return that money to our members because profit does not drive us. Members drive us. We exist to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and we accomplish this in a way that is beneficial and improves life in our service territory.

The board of trustees you elect control FreeState. They are members, just like you. The staff at the co-op are the same friends and neighbors you've known for years. We all take pride in serving you because many of our employees are also members. They live, work and serve their communities right alongside you.

We understand that you don't have a choice when it comes to your electricity provider, but you do have a choice in how you engage with the cooperative. You are a member-owner. You aren't just a customer. You are more than an account number. You own a portion of the utility that powers your home. Your neighbors who are powered by municipal entities or investor-owned utilities can't say that.

We invite you to have a conversation with the board and the staff behind the scenes—because we all work at your cooperative. Your membership matters to us.

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



Steve Foss

“You are a member-owner. You aren't just a customer. You are more than an account number. You own a portion of the utility that powers your home.”

THE POWER OF CONNECTIONS



FreeState employs 47 lineworkers classified as superintendents, journeymen, apprentices, servicemen, right-of-way and foreman. Line crews make up 59% of FreeState's employees.

When the lights go out, so do our linemen. They work together in difficult circumstances, but what keeps them safe is often the bond between them. It's a powerful connection.

When the phone rings in the middle of the night, a FreeState lineman answers the call. The power is out. Within minutes he is in the truck headed through the darkness to find the problem, make the fix and get the lights back on. It may seem like a pretty straightforward, independent job, but there is much more to the role of our cooperative line crews than turning the power back on.

It's the power of connections.

Linemen make unique connections, but it has more to do with the relationships they build within their crews than the poles they put up or the line they string. There is something special about the bond of linemen that involves a level of trust few other professions reach. The relationship is tight because it has to be.

"At any given time you have someone's life in your hands," said **BRYCE BEST, JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN**. "That's trust."

Bonds as strong as these take time and hard work. It's working alongside people for hours on end in your territory, or providing mutual aid

halfway across the state—or country. There can be long nights riding lines to find an outage, or a cold morning inside a bucket watching the sun come up, while changing a transformer. Not very many people share these experiences.

It is well-known and researched that compelling, shared experiences build efficient teams. Initial research from the World War II-era says the intense camaraderie found on battlefields translates to workforces that never step onto a battlefield.

"You do kind of feel like you're in the trenches together," said **WES HOLTHAUS, APPRENTICE LINEMAN**. "It's just something very few people know and experience."

Learning and bonding between linemen work to create a team atmosphere difficult to replicate. Cooperation and teamwork improve in a time-dependent environment.

"When you're working on getting power back on there is a sense of time pressure," said **DAVID GECHTER, TOPEKA LINE SUPERINTENDENT** and former journeyman lineman. "We're just so

dependent on electricity that without it we sometimes forget how to function, so it means for us we have to work a little quicker to solve these problems and that tends to make our teams a little tighter.”

Linemen build relationships a little differently than sitting around in a circle sharing emotions.

“They rake me over the coals,” says **GRANT WALKER, APPRENTICE LINEMAN**, with a smile. “I’m an apprentice, and that’s the way it is.”

Walker knows it isn’t personal, and it’s just part of learning about who he is and how he handles the job. It’s how others can learn about his personality.

“I know that this is part of how they get to know me, and how I handle the responsibilities they give me and my attitude, and all of those things,” added Walker. “I know that these guys have my back because I have theirs.”

Walker said when he signed up to be a lineman, he knew how it worked.

“You’re a gopher, you’re the low man, and you do a lot of grunt work, but it makes you better,” Walker said. “And, someday I’ll be doing the same to a new guy. It’s cyclical.”

Not every group of linemen work that way. Some are quieter than others, some more vocal.

“You are watched closely as an apprentice,” said **ZANE PEAK, MCLOUTH LINE SUPERINTENDENT**. “We’re watching how apprentices handle the work, what their attitude is, and how they take direction and carry those responsibilities.”

“It’s fun, but we also know it’s business, and there is a time and a place for everything,” Peak added.

A line apprentice is one of the few jobs out there you learn hands-on while studying and passing book tests before moving to the next level.

“I think one of the best parts about being an apprentice is learning hands-on, every day,” said **JORDANN MOODY, APPRENTICE LINEMAN**. “You watch, you ask questions, and that is what helps the book work all make sense and all come together.”

When it does come together for an apprentice, they will have a solid foundation to continue learning. It starts by riding with a journeyman or being put on construction crews to assist experienced linemen—some on the job longer than the apprentice has been alive.

“The thing about taking an apprentice is that you’re able to build trust a little quicker,” said Best. “Because you’re with them all the time. If you go out, they go out, and the more you do that, the more comfortable it gets.”

A career as a lineman carries a great responsibility. Much like having a family at home, you now have a family at work. You have an obligation to each of them to show up, give all you have, stay safe by working safe, and trusting the worker next to you.

There is confidence and maturity. There is accountability. It’s all in the power of connections.



From left: Kyle Hallgren, journeyman; Jordann Moody, apprentice; and Mitch West, line foreman, take a moment for a fun pose on the job site. Construction crews typically work together closely when building infrastructure, in addition to working storm recovery or other outage situations.



Grant Walker, apprentice lineman, knows that creating bonds as a new lineman is half the job. Walker, who attended Pratt Community College, has been with FreeState for three years.

THE COOPERATIVE'S

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Co-op Difference is Unique for 7 Reasons

It's a great time to be an electric cooperative member. Not only is FreeState locally owned, but it is also locally controlled by you, our members. While many Kansans pay investor-owned utilities that answer to stockholders, each month when you pay your bill you invest in your service. FreeState cares about the bottom line because any revenue left over at the end of the year (margins) returns to members as capital credits.

You elect your representatives in the board room. They have one goal in mind: keep the lights on and keep your costs stable. One of the benefits of being a co-op member is the power to change direction and leadership through the democratic process.

It's easy to see how the co-op model has been a practical approach for decades. Members work together, and you can see that influence across rural America still today.

Voluntary and open membership, democratic control and members' economic participation, among others— are just as impactful today as they were in the 1930s.

FreeState prides itself on a standard of member service that allows members access to information, and to our leadership. You can contact us at any time, and someone will be on the other end, ready to listen and help because that's what we do.

FreeState's Future is in Your Hands

Democratic member control is one of our seven cooperative principles that guides us today. As a member of FreeState, you decide who represents your interests.

Every member gets a vote to elect trustees at the annual meeting in April. You can vote by mail, at the meeting, or by proxy. We make every effort to keep the process simple and easy to navigate.

Trustees consider policies and the impact to members. They look at financial data and make decisions on how money is spent and invested. Trustees take the time to become knowledgeable about the industry, and learn how to serve each member better. They attend monthly meetings and learn about the complexities of electricity distribution.

FreeState's trustees sometimes must make difficult choices that will impact the cooperative, and themselves as they are members too.

Cooperatives are different than other businesses because their members have a say in the decisions made. We welcome and encourage members to contact us with questions or concerns. After all, it is your electric co-op.

Your Money Stays Close to Home

The third cooperative principle is members' economic participation.

Owning a portion of an electric cooperative is different than owning a business. You can't drive to a substation and take home a transformer, cut down a pole and put it in your back yard, or take down wire to use it at home. These assets are owned collectively by every member because a portion of your bill each month is directed to building and maintaining infrastructure. Every member is charged equally for this infrastructure through the energy charge, no matter your energy usage or size of residence or business.

Once bills are paid each year, trustees take what



A favorite activity of linemen is showing kids what they do. Here, Adam Hernandez, journeyman lineman, participates in show and tell about safety and equipment used for his job. This is only part of FreeState's education and outreach activities. We also visit schools, fire departments and support other events.

is left and put money back into our members' capital credit accounts. When we are financially able to do so, we pay out portions of those accounts. Capital credits are your portion of the revenue, based on how much power you purchased.

Capital credit refunds are to our members what dividends are to a stockholder in for-profit companies. But, FreeState doesn't make profits. Our goal each year is to provide electricity as close to cost as possible. That way, you get more of your money back, and it stays close to home.

The Power to Serve You

We are not alone in the mission of bringing reliable electricity to rural areas of Kansas. Thirty-one cooperatives are members of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, and 28 of those are distribution cooperatives like FreeState. We are also part of the national network of over 850 cooperatives serving millions of rural Americans.

Each co-op has a personal history and serves residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural members. Each makes its own business decision independently. That's the fourth cooperative principle, autonomy and independence.

Although we still comply with government regulations, your co-op is subject to less regulation because the board of trustees governs the co-op.

Our independence provides flexibility as we are also part of networks that provide us with resources to help make decisions and assist us in serving you, giving us a broad alliance.

Communication, Delivering Education and Outreach

When you read *Kansas Country Living*, you are helping FreeState Electric Cooperative fulfill one of our seven principles, No. 5: education, training, and information.

You are reading the cooperative's official communication source. The magazine allows us to communicate directly with you about important co-op business. We strive to provide relevant, local content that highlights or features neighbors, youth, friends and how we assist our local communities.

Training is essential, and we provide safety training for our members and the public as well as professional development for our staff. We offer learning opportunities that not only make our employees better at serving you, it makes them better at serving their communities.

Trustees are no different. They each undergo extensive training to understand the basics of electrical system management and the latest industry developments.

Working Together We Achieve More

Cooperation is the foundation of a cooperative. It's the concept most important to our business model. There is power in numbers. Literally.

Our sixth principle is cooperation among cooperatives, and it's one we take full advantage of to help strengthen our ability to serve our members.

FreeState works with other cooperatives in numerous ways.



Community is a big part of the cooperative difference. Dean Lasher and son, Jason, participate in the McLouth Patriots Day Parade. The small town celebration each spring celebrates armed forces and their contributions to the area.

One of the most recognizable is during a time of crisis or natural disaster we band together across the state to help one another through mutual aid. Why do we do that? Because it's all about the members. No matter what cooperative you own, you are part of a much bigger family.

The power of numbers gives us a louder voice when we go to bat for our members in the areas of governance. We share training resources and expertise. Good things happen when we collaborate and work toward a common goal.

Home Sweet Home

Everyone at FreeState Electric Cooperative wants to see our communities succeed because we live here, too. Giving back and having a stake in the success of the communities we serve is part of our business model and the seventh principle: concern for community.

Growth helps everyone, and as our communities grow, so does our distribution system.

We have deep roots in the communities we serve and have for decades. We work hard to provide careers of value with fair wages that also help strengthen the local economy. And, these jobs keep our communities healthy because employees and their families don't have to relocate to make a sustainable living.

We support local charities, organizations and schools. We also award Operation Round-Up grants that make a positive change with just a few coins each month.

There's a New Cooperative Energy

Across the nation America's small communities are changing, but not in the way you think. As these communities change in demographics, the values held by generations before to make these communities thrive, are stronger than ever.

There is a simpler lifestyle embraced in America's heartland, and it's one of independent living with a sense of community that looks out for neighbors and embraces a community mentality. It's a desire for new growth, new direction and building a future that will change the world.

Rural communities may seem sleepy or quiet but dig a little deeper and you'll find something happening. It's new energy, energy that matches the affordable, humble and grounded way to live that's been here since the beginning. And, opportunity has never been more evident.

These communities are served by electric cooperatives like FreeState. These cooperatives are led by members like you, created by and for the communities we serve. We are community-focused. We work to deliver the most affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to our members. Every co-op is as unique as the communities that helped shape it, changing over time as our communities grow and change.

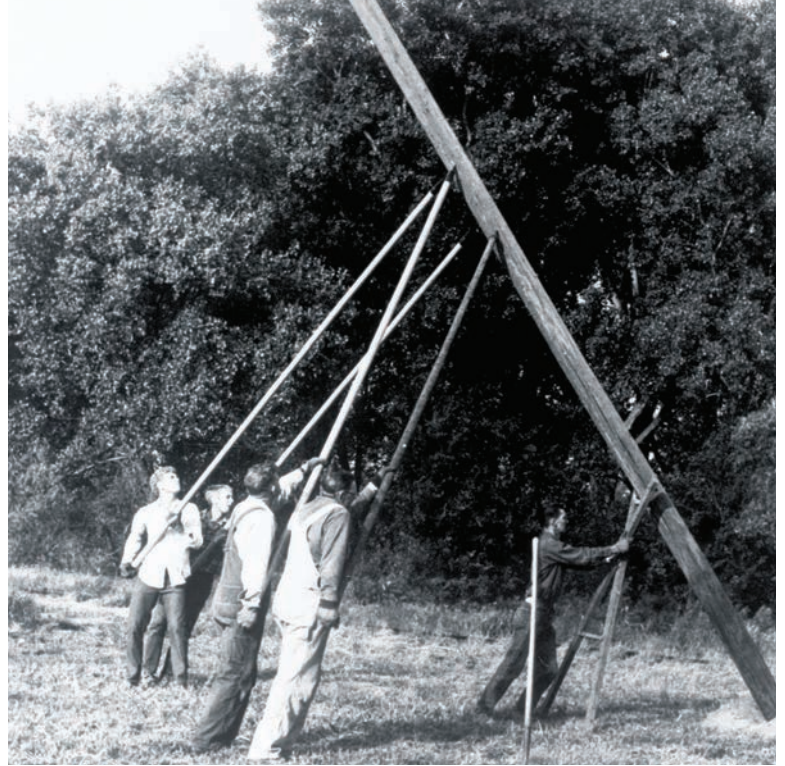
We're local. We're independent. We're together and we're mighty. Electrical co-ops like FreeState work together to learn from one another to develop new technology and infrastructure. Cooperatives power one in eight Americans across 47 states. The cooperative network employs 71,000 skilled jobs and invests billions in local economies. We are a driving force in helping attract and grow business and industry in rural America.

Electric cooperatives like FreeState aren't just economic engines. They're innovators that develop new ways to incorporate the benefits of cooperative solar, wind and other renewable energy into a balanced energy mix. We are always looking for new ways to help members save money, save energy and take advantage of the newest technologies available.

It's no secret the best part of living in a community is working together and looking out for neighbors and people working for the common good. We recognize differences, celebrate individual achievements, and know that we can't do it all alone. We're all in this together and we're all better for it.

That's community. That's what fueled the cooperative movement so many years ago, and it's the source of new energy today. It's the power of community and what being an electric cooperative is all about.

Share Your Stories



When the first infrastructure was built crews did tasks like raising poles, by hand. This was incredibly physical and difficult work. 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 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 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 member. We will begin sharing these stories in January 2020. We appreciate your willingness to share the past with the new generation of cooperative members.

Kansa Prairie Quilters Host Fifth Annual Quilt Show

The **KANSA PRAIRIE QUILTERS** of Oskaloosa are set to host their fifth annual Quilt Show on Sat., Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Oskaloosa School Library.

A group of 10 to 15 women started meeting in 1997 and formed the group with the goal of making a difference in Jefferson County. The quilters meet monthly at the Presbyterian Church in Oskaloosa. The group plan community service events and create homemade items like potholders, quilts, pillows and more that are donated to a variety of organizations.

Irene Malone says the group has fun working together. "When we can do something for others, it just makes us all feel good," she said.

The annual quilt show is a showcase event for the group bringing locals



together to raffle off a handmade quilt from the group. **THIS YEAR TWO QUILTS WILL BE RAFFLED OFF: "GARDEN JEWELS" AND "FRIENDSHIP STARTS."** Garden Jewels was started by Jacqueline Culley, an exceptional artist, having made the stained glass blocks and completed by artistic ladies of the Kansa Prairie Quilt Club. Friendship Stars was a project completed in the quilt club sewing meeting. 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 one of the group members or at the show. Other boutique and homemade items will also be available for purchase from local vendors. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL MALONEJ_00@YAHOO.COM.**



Cold Weather Rule Reminder

FreeState Electric Cooperative does not participate in the Cold Weather Rule established by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) that restricted electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31, when temperature forecasts are for 35 degrees or below. Electric cooperatives are not regulated by the KCC and therefore not mandated to participate in this policy. Temperatures are not a governing factor in disconnection for non-payment. All accounts are subject to disconnection for non-payment. **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT US AT CUSTOMERSERVICE@FREESTATE.COOP OR 800-794-1989.**

The Co-op Connection 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



Community Energy Fair & Member Appreciation Day

Join Us Oct. 23 in Topeka



Community Energy Fair

Presented by FreeState Electric Cooperative

FreeState Electric Cooperative is hosting their annual energy fair and member appreciation day on **WEDNESDAY, OCT. 23, FROM 4 TO 6 P.M.** It is the 3rd year for the event that also includes a community soap drive to assist multiple food pantries across the area.

This event is open to the public. Local businesses and organizations will be on hand to distribute information regarding energy efficiency, renewables and saving money in your home. FreeState will also have a booth with information about renewables and making the decision to add solar to your property.

A meal will be provided and there is no charge to attend the event, but members are encouraged to bring new soap items to donate or make a cash donation.

The FreeState offices in McLouth and Topeka will be accepting soap items or cash donations until Oct. 31. Donations can be dropped off from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at either office.

Items to collect:

- ▶ Liquid soap (hand and body)
- ▶ Bar soap
- ▶ Shampoo
- ▶ Laundry detergent
- ▶ Dish soap
- ▶ Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- ▶ Other personal care items

Community involvement is the difference at work. Your co-op needs your help. No donation is too small. The event will be held at the Topeka office at 1100 SW Auburn Rd. For more information about the event **CALL TOLL FREE AT 800-796-1989 OR VISIT WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/ENERGYFAIR.**

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.



DEAR MATT,

I AM RENTING AN OLDER FARMHOUSE THAT IS A BIT DRAFTY. WHAT CAN I DO TO SAVE WHEN INSULATION OR UPGRADES AREN'T POSSIBLE?

This is a common question. The number one thing I can tell you to do is weatherizing. It's simple and cost-effective. Sealing air leaks around vents, windows or doors is a great way to reduce the cost of heating and cooling. These are the most common sources of air leaks because air easily gets in (and out). You can prevent air leaks by assessing your home and noting any cracks in vents or weak seals of windows and doors.

You may want to also look at openings in walls, floors and ceilings from plumbing, ducts or wiring. These are all primary sources of air leaks.

Seal air leaks between the wall and window frame with caulking, and to seal the spaces between windows and doors you can use weather stripping. These items can be purchased at any hardware store and are inexpensive fixes. These are simple techniques that provide a return on your investment within about a year.

However, if you are in a rental you may want to consider something less permanent than caulking, especially in the winter months.

Plastic covering on windows or doors you don't use in the winter can be an inexpensive way to help slow air leaks. You can find plastic covering at a hardware store and you can use tape or staples to keep it in place. It sounds like a lot of work, but it does help keep that cold air from coming in.

There are a few other suggestions for rentals that you can do that will help save energy and costs overall. LED lightbulbs are the easiest, followed by using power strips you can turn off and on when you are home or away. You can always consider closing shades or drapes and keep the HVAC filter clean. You can see big savings by using the thermostat. A one-degree increase in the thermostat set point can reduce energy usages in HVAC systems by 3-5%.

You may not control the major improvements in your home if you rent but some of the smaller projects and lifestyle changes can have a major effect on your energy bill.

Trick or Treat



STAY AS GROUP



STAY IN POPULATED AREA



CROSS STREET CAREFULLY



DO NOT GO INTO STRANGER HOUSE



DO NOT EAT CANDY UNTIL GET HOME



DO NOT HURT ANIMALS



ID CARD



FLEXIBLE PROPS



FLASHLIGHTS