



**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

Staff

Steve Foss
Chief Executive Officer

Christopher Parr
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

Are you using your fireplace efficiently?
Remember to turn down the thermostat
when burning a fire, and close the damper
when a fire is not burning.
Source: energy.gov

FROM THE CEO

Passing the RURAL Act Mattered

Our goal at FreeState is to keep rates stable, invest your money wisely, and continue to serve each of you to the best of our ability with first-class customer service.

FreeState is primarily funded by our consumer-members. When you pay your monthly electric bill, you are investing in your service. The money you pay is invested right back into your utility.

Out of each dollar you spend, 66 cents pays our power suppliers for the power we distribute to our consumer-members. Ten cents pays property taxes and debts (loans), and the last 24 cents operates the cooperative. Those 24 cents are what we have the most control over and it pays for infrastructure, operations, and a small percentage goes to pay salaries and other expenses.

The not-for-profit cooperative business model must receive at least 85% of all income from consumer-members to maintain tax-exempt status under federal law. When I say tax-exempt that doesn't mean all taxes. That means income tax. We still pay property taxes, and state sales tax, among other taxes, but we don't pay tax on the income consumer-members invest in the cooperative each month.

When the cooperative applies for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for natural disaster recovery that money was once considered capital, however, in the 2017 Tax Bill that funding was inadvertently changed to be categorized as non-member income. This categorization meant many cooperatives had a hard time meeting the 85% requirement and were at risk of losing that tax-exempt status. The law contained a provision that counted federal, state and local grants to cooperatives as non-member income rather than capital, which is how grants were defined prior to the 2017 Tax Bill.

Enter the RURAL Act — the Revitalizing Underdeveloped Rural Areas and Lands Act — helping solve the problem by changing the tax code to exempt federal, state and local grants from being defined as member-income for electric co-ops.



Steve Foss

Continued on page 16G ▶

We visited with your representatives on your behalf and made it a priority piece of legislation because it threatened our business model and the fundamental way we save you money.

OPERATION Round-Up

A Year of Giving

In 2019, FreeState members generously gave \$113,412 in spare change through the Operation Round-Up® program, benefitting local organizations. This year brings the total donated since the launch of the program in 2017 to \$194,892. The FreeState Community Foundation facilitates the program with the help of a volunteer member committee that reviews and awards grant funds quarterly.

The committee allocated \$48,480 in 2017 and \$64,980 in 2018, all made possible by the generosity of members participating in the program.

No matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community. It only takes a few coins a month to add up to a significant change for our local communities and volunteer-driven organizations across the FreeState service territory.

For more information on how to apply for funding visit www.freestate.coop/operationroundup. **APPLICATION DEADLINES ARE: MARCH 1, JUNE 1, SEPTEMBER 1 AND DECEMBER 1 OF 2020.** Please notify our billing department if you'd like to opt out (or in) to Operation Round-Up® by calling 800-794-1989.

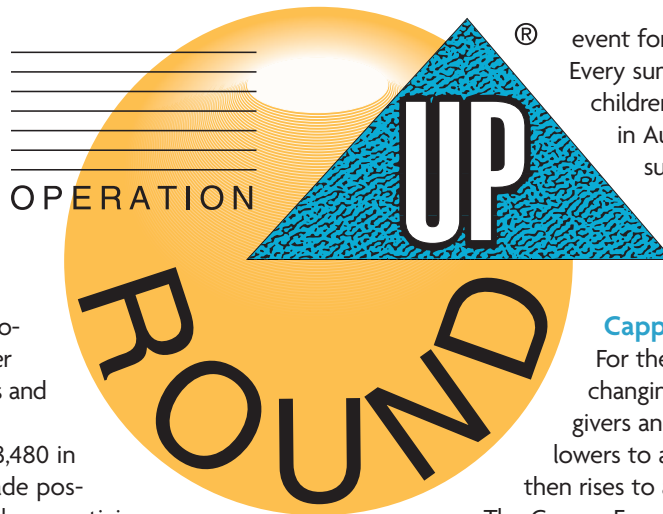
The following organizations and their specific projects were funded in 2019.

The Auburn Park Project – \$14,500

The Auburn Park Project is an independent organization tied to the City of Auburn with the sole purpose of building a better quality of life in and around the community. The park project provides wellness and involvement at zero cost to citizens.

Stull UMC – Back to School Project – \$1,500

The church's "Back to School" project has been an exciting



event for the community since 2010. Every summer names are collected for children in need of school items and in August the children pick up these supplies and are also given back-to-school clothing from the clothes closet the church maintains year-round.

Capper Foundation – \$3,016

For the purchase of a height-adjustable changing table to benefit both caregivers and wheelchair users. The table lowers to accommodate transfers, and then rises to a comfortable working height.

The Capper Foundation provides residential and day services for medically fragile adults with disabilities, outside of a nursing home.

Royal Valley Community Learning Center Childcare – \$5,000

The funded project includes updates to the dedicated classroom including floors, storage and paint. Funds will also provide books, toys, games, art and school supplies.

Silver Lake Public Library – \$3,000

The Silver Lake Public Library continues to work on the expansion and renovation project with the goal to improve library services. Proposed improvements include staffing areas and storage to allow the staff more room, open up areas for more library materials and improve counter space and storage areas.

KSU Mesonet – \$9,000

A weather data network called the Mesonet, includes 60 stations across Kansas. Each station measures wind speed/direction, air temperature/humidity, solar radiation, atmospheric pressure, precipitation, soil temperature and soil moisture. Funding provided to the project will add a weather station to the network in Jefferson County.

Shawnee County Fire District No. 2, Auburn – \$3,500

The fire department in Auburn received funding to purchase the Stokes Basket and grain bin rescue tools to increase the department's ability to provide prompt rescue services in the rural community. The purchase of both items will allow the department to provide mutual aid rescue services to surrounding districts.

Race Against Breast Cancer – \$2,000

The Race Against Breast Cancer is a privately funded, non-profit organization working to improve health through education, access, early detection and breast health awareness in northeast Kansas. They accomplish this through providing breast health education materials to those in medical and financial need through a partnership with area health clinics. The RABC also pays for screening and diagnostic mammography services for those in medical and financial need. The group assists 400 to 600 individuals per year.

Perry-Lecompton Elementary – \$3,649.46

Funding provided multisensory literacy instruction and provided staff with the curriculum, tools and training needed. Students can explore the sensory hallways daily for exercise and sensory input. Funding will also create a literacy lab in the Perry Elementary library for the benefit of all students. . The students will move in small groups through structured tasks that focus on literacy skills like phonemic awareness. The literacy lab will change weekly to keep kids engaged in learning.

God's Storehouse, Meriden – \$10,000

A change in landowners has given the organization a unique opportunity to invest in the long-term sustainability in the organization with the purchase of adjacent land.

Jefferson County Fire Dept. No. 9, McLouth – \$25,000

To further perform lifesaving procedures, the fire department received funding to purchase a 2011 x-series cardiac monitor AED that is compatible with the local ambulance service.

Dover Food Pantry – \$1,000

Funding will be dedicated to the ongoing support of the pantry to provide food and toiletry items to those in need.

Jefferson County Historical Society – \$2,500

The historical society asked for funding to restore the boardwalk/porch area on the front side of the Reynolds General Store. Without needed repair to the building, the porch will pull away from the main building and allow moisture to enter the building.

K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County – \$2,000

K-State Research and Extension offers a free, out-of-the-classroom educational field trip called Day on the Farm. Funding provided assists the Lawrence Public School District in transportation costs.

Oskaloosa Public Library – \$1,900

With library volunteers providing the labor, the funding will help to develop an outdoor community area with a concrete table, benches, planters for flowers, drainage extenders and other small items.

Topeka YMCA/Rock Steady Boxing – \$2,300

Rock Steady Boxing is a unique exercise program, based on training by boxing pros, and adapted to people with Parkinson's disease. The program incorporates boxing moves into a class of calisthenics, cardio and flexibility training. The funding will provide pay to instructors, items for class, the licensing fee for the program and training and certification for the coaches.

Volunteer Member Committee



Brad Parker
Silver Lake



Melinda Harwood McLouth



Deron Johnson
Silver Lake



Carol Marple
Wakarusa



Morgan Starcher
McLouth

Silver Lake Fire Dept. – \$13,305

Funds from Operation Round-Up will help develop a grain bin rescue team trained and capable of performing rescues for Shawnee County and other neighboring counties. The department would like to purchase equipment for the team, including ropes, harness and other tools for a rescue that can also double for water rescue, accidents and extractions.

Valley Falls EMS – \$7,242

Funding will assist the department in purchasing a power lift cot for one of the two ambulances. These cots help volunteer staff with safely lifting patients. The cot will also decrease the likelihood of volunteer injuries.

Meriden Antique Engine and Threshing Association – \$2,500

The Bloomfield Church is part of the living history town, Cottonwood Station. Funding is to help the restoration process.

Trustee Election

Cooperative Prepares for Important Step in Governance

Each year the members elect trustees to the FreeState Board of Trustees and it is time again to begin the election process. Our trustees are an integral part of our cooperative as they have a fiduciary duty to member-owners and set policies.

Our board of trustees always works diligently with the best interests of all of our members in mind. The FreeState board recognizes the importance of a fair, balanced and transparent election process. Their focus is to ensure adequate representation for all members.

FreeState members who may be interested in serving on the board of trustees can submit their names to be nominated for the election to the board.

The following trustees are up for re-election at the annual meeting on April 21, 2020.

- ▶ West District – **DON MONTGOMERY**
- ▶ West District – **LARRY BUTEL**
- ▶ East District – **JEANINE MURPHY**
- ▶ East District – **RALPH PHILLIPS**

Four trustee positions are up for election this year. Three of the positions will be elected to a three-year term, and the fourth position (currently held by Murphy) will be elected to a two-year term. The terms of these four positions are staggered to allow the board to return to a nine-position board following last year's retirements. Moving Murphy's position to a two-year term beginning in 2020 will put all trustees on a three-year, three-position elected rotation in 2022. Murphy's position will become a three-year term at that time.

The nominating committee, made of members appointed by each of the trustees, will meet in early February. This committee will review the names submitted for consideration and prepare a slate of nominees to be presented to the membership at the FreeState annual meeting. You'll see more information about this process as we move toward the annual meeting in April.

Trustees are responsible for attending one monthly meeting, occurring on the fourth Wednesday of each month, typically held in Lawrence.

What Makes a Good FreeState Trustee?

We seek those who have a sincere interest in preserving the strength of FreeState's operations and maintaining a productive relationship with our members. We look for our trustees to maintain open lines of communication with the districts and members they serve. Trustees work together to ensure equitable treatment to all members across the system and strive to be knowledgeable about trends and circumstances that may affect the members and communities in FreeState's service territory.

Potential Trustees Must:

- ▶ Be a FreeState member
- ▶ Have a bona fide residence in the district with an opening

Potential Trustees Cannot:

- ▶ Be employed by or have a financial interest in an enterprise selling electric energy or services
- ▶ Be employed by or have a financial interest in a business that sells services or supplies to FreeState
- ▶ Be a current FreeState employee or have been an employee within the past three years
- ▶ Be a close relative of a current FreeState trustee or employee
- ▶ Have entered a plea of guilty or no contest or have been adjudged as guilty of a felony crime

If you are interested in seeking a position on the board, please contact 800-794-1989 or visit www.freestate.coop/annualmeeting to download an application. **APPLICATIONS ARE DUE ON MONDAY, FEB. 3, AT 4 P.M.**

Positions Up for Election

Positions are all at-large. All cooperative members vote for all positions.



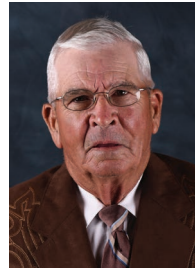
LARRY BUTEL
Overbrook



DON MONTGOMERY
Burlingame



JEANINE MURPHY
Leavenworth



RALPH PHILLIPS
Mayetta



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.

Last month we were at the Topeka Farm Show talking about the cooperative difference and how to save on your energy usage. I want to thank my counterparts at Bluestem Electric Cooperative and 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative for sharing the booth, and together we really did see a lot of you! We gave away three multifunctional pressure cookers during the show. One of the questions I got was how much energy these multifunctional cookers use compared to other methods of cooking, and if I like how they cook.

First, the easy answer. I love how these cookers can prep a quick meal. My wife and I often wish we would cook more in them! With kids, work, school, and everything else, we often don't think about dinner until it's time to eat. No matter the name you use for these multifunctional cookers, they are a quick and easy way to get dinner on the table for a busy family.

They are also pretty amazing when it comes to energy consumption. They shine because pressurizing of food decreases cooking time and these units are insulated. Conventional stoves and slow cookers tend to release heat when they cook, which can heat up the kitchen.

For example, if I want to cook a simple roast in the oven on medium heat it will use about 2,000 watts, or six hours consuming 6 kWh or about 66 cents. If I use the pressure cooker it consumes 1,000 watts, it only needs to run for one hour. It will consume about 1 kWh at approximately 11 cents. And, if I used a slow cooker it would consume about 200 watts on a low or medium setting, but cooking for eight hours would equal about 1.6 kWh costing approximately 17 cents.

The slow cooker and multifunctional pressure cooker are very efficient when it comes to getting dinner on the table, and are easy ways to save on your electric bill, especially in the summer months.

Energy Use Coordinator, Matt Lambert, gave away a multifunctional cooker at the Topeka Farm Show. Don Navinsky, Easton, was the winner.



Other Ways to Save Energy and Money in the Kitchen

- ▶ Use cold water whenever possible
- ▶ Don't let the water run while you do dishes
- ▶ Keep the refrigerator door shut
- ▶ Don't use the heated dry cycle on your dishwasher

REMEMBER WHEN THE **Lights** Came On



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 residence. Perhaps it's a memory of your first electric appliance, or your ability to use electricity in barns or shops. We want to share your stories with our members.

Wilma Plake

This story is not about Leavenworth Electric or Kaw Valley, but about the first time I had seen lights. I think of it often as I see the power that now surrounds us. I was about three or four years old, living in southern Missouri. We lived in a place called Peanut Ridge in Pierce City. We were very poor, so they say, but family and love help one not notice. We had no lights, running water, or an inside bathroom. At the time, it was about 1941 or 1942.

For some reason, my mother and I were traveling to Kansas City by train. As we approached Union Station, I was looking out the window, and I saw the most amazing sight.

"Momma, what is that?" I asked.

"Those are lights," she answered. I can still hear her voice as she explained what those bright glows were.

Growing up, we don't ask questions as to why this or that, only as we grow older, and we lose those special people and special moments that we wish we knew more about. But I know that I will always remember where I was "when the lights came on."

Charlotte Milroy

I am living in a house that got electricity sometime in 1948 or 1949. I was in the first grade. The house was built in 1903 on 240 acres by my mother's grandparents and her father. It was a three-story stone house. My mother and her brother grew up here, and my sister and I did, too. In 2015 I moved in, and I had gutted the house and replaced the wiring. We had a yard light, and I remember that was a big thing being able to see outside after dark and when going to the outhouse!

The first thing my parents purchased was a refrigerator and a freezer, and they were International appliances. That freezer lasted for many years. Dad soon bought an electric separator, and he sold cream. The radio was a big thing. My father and I listened to Kansas State basketball games. I remember listening to Gunsmoke and the Lone Ranger and Roy Rogers. Dad listened to the farm reports on the morning WIBW programs because we didn't get a TV until 1957.

**SUBMIT YOUR STORIES
OR PHOTOS FROM THE
PAST TO:**

FreeState Electric
Attn: Marketing
PO Box 70
McLouth, KS 66054

FROM THE CEO

The RURAL Act Mattered

Continued from page 16A ►

Cooperatives across the country, including FreeState, were working hard behind the scenes as 2019 came to a close. We visited with your representatives on your behalf and made it a priority piece of legislation because it threatened our business model and the fundamental way we save you money. It was important because the change protected members from increased rates and provided certainty in our ability to leverage federal and state grants for development and storm recovery. Without that tax-exempt status, the financial burden of forgoing federal money for fear of losing the status would have placed a financial burden on the cooperative in the event of a natural disaster and would have likely been passed on to our consumer-members.

I'm happy to report the bill passed in the final hours of the 2019 session before the Christmas holiday and the Congressional recess.

The RURAL Act is part of a larger tax and spending bill that will fund our government through September 2020. The RURAL Act makes grants exempt from being counted as income, and it is retroactive to the 2018 tax year. This puts us at ease, and knowing we have the ability to apply for and accept, federal or state funding in the face of an emergency event is a burden we can keep off the shoulders of each of you.



Steve Foss, CEO, (left) congratulates Randy Richards on his retirement from FreeState on Friday, Jan. 3, 2020. Richards served as the assistant general manager, but started at Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative in 1980 as an apprentice lineman.

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

Medical Necessity Notification Policy

Sometimes events beyond the cooperative's control cause power outages. If your health or well-being depends on equipment that requires electricity, please contact us. We will do our best in the event of an outage to get power restored as quickly and safely as possible.

FreeState does keep a record of residential service locations where life-sustaining electrical equipment is used. When planned outages or service interruptions for nonpayment are scheduled, we will attempt to provide advanced notice to allow preparations to be made to be without power.

MEDICAL NECESSITY NOTIFICATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE PRIORITY SERVICE RESTORATION, and member accounts with this designation are not exempt from planned interruptions. These

designated accounts are also not exempt from their financial responsibilities or termination of service by FreeState policies. Notifying FreeState of your situation does not guarantee uninterrupted electric service, nor does it ensure immediate attention to your service should the area experience a power outage. It does alert us to the situation. Letting us know your specific needs allows FreeState to communicate promptly with you.

Once you contact us and alert us of your situation, FreeState will designate your account as a medical necessity. FreeState will only be aware of your condition if you contact us first. In the event of a scheduled disconnection, we will make every effort to contact you so alternative arrangements can be made.

In addition to contacting the cooperative,

we also offer these suggestions for your safety and strongly encourage you to implement them:

- Obtain a backup power source recommended by the manufacturer of any life-sustaining or critical care equipment you may have in your home. For example, battery back-ups or standby generators can provide you with electric power if service from the cooperative is interrupted.
- Have a plan. Talk to relatives or friends and have backup places you can go to in the event of a significant power outage.

It's important we know about your situation. Your safety matters to us. Please call our office at 800-794-1989 to notify FreeState of any medical necessity needs.

Winter Assistance Agencies

The following agencies have been known to assist people who may need help paying utility bills. FreeState Electric Cooperative is not affiliated with any of these organizations. Contact information is provided as a courtesy to you.

- ▶ **GOOD SHEPHERD THRIFT SHOP**
913-845-3964 *Jefferson and Leavenworth counties only. Must have a copy of a bill.
- ▶ **JEFFERSON COUNTY SERVICE ORGANIZATION**
785-863-2637
- ▶ **CATHOLIC CHARITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES**
Leavenworth County: 913-651-8060
Jefferson County: 913-433-2039
- ▶ **NORTHEAST KANSAS COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM**
Hiawatha Central Office: 785-742-2222
- ▶ **SALVATION ARMY**
Leavenworth 913-682-6253
Topeka 785-233-9648
- ▶ **LIEAP – LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
800-432-0043 or <http://www.ks-energy-assistance.com/lieap>
- ▶ **AMERICAN RED CROSS**
Topeka: 785-234-0568
Leavenworth: 913-682-6222
Atchison: 913-367-5355
- ▶ **PENN HOUSE/BALLARD CENTER**
785-842-0440
- ▶ **KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE**
785-357-4763
*Must have children living in the house
- ▶ **DOORSTEP TOPEKA**
785-357-5341
- ▶ **LEAVENWORTH ASSIST CENTER**
913-682-7873
- ▶ **LET'S HELP**
785-234-6208 *By appointment only
- ▶ **TOPEKA NORTH OUTREACH**
785-286-1370
- ▶ **KANSAS GIFT OF WARMTH**
800-794-4780
- ▶ **WARM HEARTS OF DOUGLAS COUNTY**
785-841-5756
- ▶ **NEKAP – JACKSON COUNTY ONLY**
785-364-4055

YOUTH PROGRAMS

BUILD the BEST Youth

FreeState Electric Cooperative invests in our youth through opportunities designed to provide dynamic, personal interactions with fellow youth, cooperative employees and legislators among others. Youth programs are all-expenses-paid and will truly be experiences of a lifetime for area youth. Two students will have an opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in June, and two students will experience Steamboat Springs, Colorado, at Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in July.

Any high school junior living in the FreeState Electric Cooperative territory, whose parent or guardian is a member of the cooperative is eligible.

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

Each year, cooperatives select youth for this opportunity as part of our strong commitment to the community and our mission to inspire future generations to become leaders.

This trip opens the eyes of many students to future possibilities in leadership roles while building lifelong friendships. Delegates have visited many of our nation's monuments, and have also attended the NRECA Youth Day that brings together 1,800 youth from 44 states to hear speakers.

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

At the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, campers create a "candy cooperative" and participate in daily membership meetings where they establish committees and elect a general manager and board of directors. Youth learn about the workings of electric cooperatives through a variety of activities.

How to Apply

DEADLINE IS FEB. 10, 2020. Students who are interested in applying can find **MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/YOUTH.**

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
- ▶ **JEFFERSON HILL VINEYARDS AND GUEST HOUSE**
12381 Washington Road, McLouth, KS 66054
- ▶ **GOOD ENERGY SOLUTIONS**
641 E 22nd St., Lawrence, KS 66604
- ▶ **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 Road, Winchester, KS 66097
- ▶ **WORTHINGTON HARDWARE AND AUTO PARTS**
313 E. Front St., Perry, KS 66073