



FREESTATE ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.

# The Outlet

## FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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### STAFF

**Christopher Parr**  
CEO

## DISTRICT OFFICES

### MCLOUTH OFFICE

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

### TOPEKA OFFICE

1100 SW Auburn Road  
Topeka, KS 66615

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday  
7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

## REMINDER

Members will see the ESC adjustment reflected on their monthly bill (\$2.00) starting this month.

## FROM THE CEO

# Empowering Communities: The Seventh Cooperative Principle

At FreeState we know that powering communities means more than poles and wires. It means supporting organizations and projects that improve the quality of life for our members. Internally, we also encourage our staff to get involved in their communities. Some of the people behind your power also coach youth sports, serve on boards, and volunteer at various community-focused organizations.

Concern for Community is more than one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that drive your electric cooperative. It's a principle that resonates with our members! A recent study done by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives members across the country rated the seventh principle as the most important to them, and FreeState members locally also agree.

Why does this principle tend to resonate with members? Because it encourages a conscientious approach that goes beyond powering communities. It's embracing social responsibility and building sustainable communities because our success is deeply intertwined with the success of our communities.

Community support is something FreeState takes pride in. In 2024,

FreeState launched the **DONATION DOLLARS PROGRAM**, which champions initiatives that enhance community spirit and make an impact. This program commits 31 cents per member to sponsorships and donations in the service territory. We can help support organizations that create resilient and thriving communities by pooling everyone's resources.

The **OPERATION ROUND-UP PROGRAM** also continues to serve organizations across our service territory. In this issue, you'll see an overview of the 2023 Operation Round-Up. As a reminder, this program is voluntary, and members who participate round up their bill each month. That spare change makes a significant difference for organizations that serve others. It's an easy way to contribute to the greater good.

In addition to these member-based programs, FreeState also provides funding through our CoBank Sharing



Chris Parr

“We look beyond ourselves and explore ways to make a difference individually and collectively.”

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# CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY.

Generosity and giving are important aspects of the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community. In 2023, participating FreeState members should feel great, knowing the impact of their generous actions.

FreeState's Operation Round-Up program has been helping area organizations and communities for seven years. In that time, contributing members have assisted 109 organizations with \$447,467 to make impacts in the communities that we all call home. Funding for Operation Round-Up is donated by member-owners of FreeState Electric Cooperative who volunteer to round-up their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar amount.

The FreeState Foundation Committee facilitates the program with the help of a volunteer member committee. Members on this committee meet to review and award grant monies quarterly. The Volunteer Member Committee members include: **MELINDA HARWOOD**, McLouth; **MORGAN STARCHER** (Murrfield Farms), McLouth; **DERON JOHNSON**, Silver Lake; and **CAROL MARPLE**, Wakarusa. The committee is looking for potential volunteers. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, please contact the office.

The committee allocations are made possible by the generosity of the members participating in the program. No matter how great or small the act, each time we give back, we strengthen our community. A few extra coins a month can quickly add up to a significant change for our local communities and volunteer-driven organizations across the FreeState service territory.

For more information or how to apply for funding visit: [www.freestate.coop/ORU](http://www.freestate.coop/ORU). **APPLICATION DEADLINES ARE MARCH 1, JUNE 1, SEPT. 1 AND DEC. 1** of each calendar year.

If you would like to opt out (or in) of Operation Round-Up call our office at 800-794-1989.

In 2023, Operation Round-Up made donations to the 14 organizations listed on Page 12C equaling **\$47,800**. These dollars provided funding to carry out the cooperative principle Concern for Community across FreeState's nine county service territory. We sincerely appreciate members who participate in this charitable giving program. We could not do what we do for our communities without you.

### **NORTH TOPEKA OUTREACH — \$1,500**

North Topeka Outreach provides emergency assistance to individuals and families who are facing financial crisis in our local communities. These crises could lead to (worsening) health issues, eviction or basic utilities being disconnected.

### **PAWSITIVELY JEFFERSON COUNTY — \$1,000**

PJC reduces, stabilizes and vaccinates feral cats through a partnership with K-State University Veterinary Medicine. With a wait list of 450 cats, it can take as long as 9-12 months for vaccinations. Additional funding doubles the number of cats that can be taken to Helping Hands Humane Society (HHHS) each month.

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHEAST KANSAS — \$5,000**

Funds distributed to the Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas help support the Leavenworth Family Support Center.

### **DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY (DPIL) — \$2,500**

Although Dolly Parton's Dollywood Foundation provides support by sending out books to children and maintaining a record-keeping database, local affiliates must raise \$2.20 for the cost of each book and administer and promote the program in their area. In 2022, the Kansas Children's Cabinet began paying half of the local costs for the program. As the local affiliate, DPIL of Douglas County pays approximately \$1.10 per enrolled child. The funding provides books for approximately two months of the program, or 4,545 books.

### **OSKALOOSA RURAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (ORHD) — \$16,000**

ORHD owns and operates three low-income, elderly apartment complexes in Oskaloosa. Madison and Rhodes Apartment's bathing safety project will use the funds to convert tub-style showers to walk-in showers to provide safe and accessible bathing facilities for 15 of their apartment units.

### **CAPPER FOUNDATION — \$4,000**

Families with a child who has a disability may be financially challenged to meet all the expenses that arise. Capper Foundation makes the Pediatric Scholarship Assistance Fund available to families so they are assured their child will not be denied therapy services. Funds also help cover the costs of replacing two harnesses to ensure children's safety using therapy equipment.

### **LEAVENWORTH COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY — \$1,000**

Funding will help provide long-term roofing in outdoor kennel areas, which are currently covered with tarps.

### **HELPING HANDS HUMANE SOCIETY (HHHS) — \$1,000**

There are 140 kennels in the facility in need of mesh metal toppers, which prevent dogs from climbing out of the kennels. The original design of the facility did not include toppers. This funding will help purchase and install toppers for a portion of the kennels.

### **DELAWARE TOWNSHIP LIBRARY — \$300**

Funding will purchase adjustable height tables and new folding chairs for children and adults. Currently, children stand on chairs to reach table height, which is unsafe.

### **SILVER LAKE USD 372 EDUCATION FOUNDATION — \$3,500**

Silver Lake hopes to provide students and adults with disabilities with job and life skills in an inclusive setting. Funds will go toward a student-led coffee shop in partnership with Dialogue Coffee and The Capper Foundation.

### **DOVER COMMUNITY CENTER — \$7,500**

Funding will replace the existing flat roof over the gymnasium side of the building in the first phase of the project.

### **DOUGLAS COUNTY 4-H FOUNDATION, INC. — \$2,000**

K-State Research and Extension in Douglas County in cooperation with the Douglas County 4-H Foundation will use funds for a "Day on the Farm" event for Douglas County fourth-grade classes. Offering students an opportunity to learn the value of agriculture, conservation, soil health, nutrition and career exploration.

### **PANTRY OF HOPE/JOYFUL HEARTS — \$1,500**

Joyful Hearts with Helping Hands is a part of the Pantry of Hope, Inc. in Nortonville, which provides free clothing (newborn to senior citizens) and personal hygiene items. Funds will help fund additional storage with a 12 feet by 24 feet shed behind the store.

### **HOUSE OF HOPE — \$1,000**

House of Hope promotes self-sufficiency for the homeless population by helping them obtain employment. If needed, House of Hope funds the first three weeks of their enrollment and additional funding helps to cover the first three weeks while they secure employment.

## Empowering Communities: The Seventh Principle

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Success program. This program allows our employees to exemplify Concern for the Community by internally raising funds which are then matched by our lender, CoBank. If you know an organization that might be a great partner for FreeState — encourage them to apply. **THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 1.**

Concern for Community is a principle that calls for action. We look beyond ourselves and explore ways to make a difference collectively and individually. We uplift, empower, and sustain our lives by actively engaging in our communities. FreeState is powering your homes and businesses and empowering positive changes in the places we call home.

## REMINDER OF SERVICE CHARGE ADJUSTMENT

On Jan. 16, 2023, the board of trustees approved a two-phase electric service charge (ESC) adjustment. Members will see the last approved adjustment (\$2) reflected on their monthly bill starting this month (February 2024).

It's important to note that every payment you make to the co-op is an investment in your electrical service. As a not-for-profit cooperative, we do not make a profit. We operate each year with the revenue collected. If money is left over at the end of the year, we allocate the margins to members in the form of capital credits (when the cooperative's financial health allows).

The ESC is a fixed cost that includes the cost of infrastructure that brings power to your home. No matter how much energy you use, there are costs for FreeState to provide you with the service. The ESC is designed to recoup the costs of providing power.

FreeState works hard to control what costs we can, and trustees and staff know there is never a good time to make any adjustments.

**If you have questions regarding your service, we encourage you to reach out to [customerservice@freestate.coop](mailto:customerservice@freestate.coop).**

## YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

FreeState Electric Cooperative invests in our youth through opportunities designed to provide dynamic, personal interactions with fellow youth, cooperative employees and legislators.

These experiences guide students to develop leadership and communication skills important to becoming employable adults. Youth programs are all-expenses-paid trips that are truly experiences of a lifetime for area youth.

One student will have an opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in June, and one student will experience Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in July. The two selected high school students will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

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

**FIND OUT MORE AND APPLY AT [WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/YOUTH](http://WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/YOUTH) BY FEB. 15, 2024.**

