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FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.

The Outlet

FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Larry Butel
Overbrook

Bill Conley
Delia

Karol Lohman
Leavenworth

Don Montgomery
Burlingame

Jeanine Murphy
Leavenworth

Ralph Phillips
Mayetta

Rob Sage
Maple Hill

Matthew Turecek
Valley Falls

Mark Wulfschlegel
Lawrence

STAFF

Christopher Parr
CEO

DISTRICT OFFICES

MCLOUTH OFFICE

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

TOPEKA OFFICE

1100 S.W. Auburn Road
Topeka, KS 66615

OFFICE HOURS

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

REMINDER

Trustee election ballots were mailed. Please submit your vote by April 11, or vote in person at the annual meeting.

FROM THE CEO

Official Notice of the Annual Meeting

To the attention of all members of FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc., organized and existing under and by virtue of Chapter 17, Article 46, of the laws and the State of Kansas.

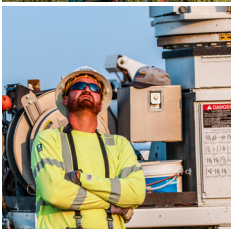
You and each of you are hereby notified that on the 15th day of April 2025, the annual meeting of said FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc., referred to above, will be held at 6 p.m. at the McLouth office located in Jefferson County at 507 N. Union, McLouth, Kansas, to take action on the following matters:

1. The report of officers, trustees and committees.
2. The election of three trustees of the cooperative.
3. All other business that may come before the meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.



LINEWORKERS POWER OUR COMMUNITIES

Lineworker Appreciation 2025



Thank you, line and tree crews!

Your 2025 Trustee Candidates

The entire FreeState membership will vote for all trustee positions up for election. Members will vote for two trustees in the East District and one trustee in the West District. The candidates who receive the most votes in each district will serve three-year terms as member-elected cooperative trustees. We understand that not every member can attend the annual meeting, but we want to ensure you can participate in the election.

Each FreeState member gets only one vote, and every member has **THREE** voting options available: **ONLINE, MAIL OR IN PERSON AT THE ANNUAL MEETING.**

EAST

RALPH PHILLIPS

MAYETTA (INCUMBENT)



Ralph Phillips has been a cooperative member for 51 years, and for 39 of those, he has served as a trustee.

Phillips has served on numerous boards including Mid-Am Dairy Co-op, the Dairy Farmers of America area council and the Jackson

County Farm Bureau. He served as a 4-H community leader and is a former president of both the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. board and the FreeState board.

Phillips has earned all three certifications for board members from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He earned Credentialed Cooperative Director in 2002, Board Leadership Certificate in 2008 and the Director Gold Credential in 2023.

He and his wife, Phyllis, live in rural Mayetta. They are parents to five children who have blessed them with 15 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, including a set of very active twin boys.

EAST

KAROL LOHMAN

LEAVENWORTH (INCUMBENT)



Karol Lohman has been a cooperative member for 44 years and has served as a trustee for the past three.

A graduate of the Kansas State University College of Agriculture, she worked 37 years at Leavenworth County Co-op and retired as the general manager of both the St. Francis Mercantile Equity Exchange Co-op and the K-State Extension Ag Agent of Leavenworth County.

She has volunteered with the Leavenworth County Livestock Committee, the Water Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), and is a WRAPS committee member of the Jarbalo Community Church.

Lohman earned Credentialed Cooperative Director status through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in 2022, and the Board Leadership Certificate in 2024.

Lohman and her husband, Terry, have two adult sons and an 18-month-old granddaughter.

WEST

MARK WULFKUHLE

LAWRENCE (INCUMBENT)



Mark Wulfkuhle has been a cooperative member for 45 years and a trustee for 15 years.

He earned his bachelor's degree in animal science and industry, and has leadership training from the Kansas State

University board, Farm Credit Association board and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He has a Kansas Commercial Applicator 1A.

Wulfkuhle is the president of Rocking H Ranch, Inc. and manager of both 2BMD Farms, LLC and M&B Applicating, LLC.

Wulfkuhle earned Credentialed Cooperative Director status through NRECA in 2010, and the Board Leadership Certificate in 2021.

Wulfkuhle and his wife, Brenna, live in Lawrence and have three grown children. They were honored to be named the Farm Bureau Farm Family of the Year.

WEST

TOM SLOAN

LAWRENCE (CHALLENGER)



Tom Sloan has been a cooperative member for 44 years and has seven meters among his properties.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Syracuse University, a master's from Michigan State and doctorate from University of North

Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Sloan served on the utilities committee all 24 years in the Kansas House of Representatives. After retiring, he served as a senior adviser to Public Utilities Fortnightly, transitioning the publication from a focus on public utility commissions and electric utilities to one that included federal agency leaders and state legislators.

Sloan serves on the Douglas County Rural Water District 1, Information Network of Kansas, LMH Health Board and the Kansas Rural Water Association Board.

Sloan and his wife, Gail, have been married 45 years, raise corn and soybeans and have a registered sheep farm in Douglas County.

Candidate Q & A

As part of the application process, all trustee candidates were asked the same questions about serving member-owners of FreeState. Below are the answers each candidate provided to those questions.

EXPLAIN THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE.

PHILLIPS – At a cooperative, the members are the owners of the business.

LOHMAN – Cooperatives are owned and governed by the members. All facets of the co-op business are transparent to the member-owners. All members have a voice; they vote for representatives to serve on the board and give direction to management. Being not-for-profit, cooperatives return any excess revenues to the members.

WULFKUHLE – Being a member of the co-op, I can have a voice in how the business is run. I'm able to vote for the trustees who make the ultimate decisions on the direction of the co-op. Each member is an owner of the business who is allocated capital credits from any excess revenues, unlike an investor-owned utility, where dividends are paid only to the investors.

SLOAN – Cooperatives are owned and led by their members. Investor-owned utilities have non-member boards and out of state investors who expect a good return on their investment. Cooperatives return unneeded revenues to their members. Management of cooperatives tend to be more responsive to member suggestions and requests because of the local ownership model.

WHAT CRITICAL ISSUES DO YOU BELIEVE THE CO-OP SHOULD FOCUS ON IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

PHILLIPS – We need to be diligent about transparency and focus on renewables, such as wind and solar.

Another challenge is that many in the workforce are approaching retirement.

LOHMAN – Staying tuned in to industry trends and legislative changes.

Ensuring the culture of the cooperative makes the needs and morale of both employees and members a priority.

Keeping up-to-date equipment and facilities, adequate staffing and technology upgrades; no short cuts when it comes to safety.

WULFKUHLE – Securing a long-term power contract with cheap, dependable power sources.

Working to keep costs low, which helps keep rates low for our members.

Using the new metering technology to better understand the ever-changing needs of our members.

SLOAN – Aging infrastructure, especially in light of increasing summer temperatures and adverse weather events.

Technological innovations to make system monitoring easier and more efficient.

Aging workforce and the need to compete for employees in an ever-tightening market.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE WOULD YOU BRING TO FREESTATE'S BOARD AND MEMBERS?

PHILLIPS – I worked 51 years as a dairyman. When I first ran for the board, I was looking for ways to reduce power bills for myself and others. I enjoyed transitioning through the merger. It had been considered for many years before we found such a good match.

LOHMAN – I have a strong cooperative background in the farm supply industry — working my way from the ground up to management. While serving on the FreeState Board, I have attended meetings and taken courses specific to board responsibilities and industry knowledge. I pride myself in keeping an open mind to hear all the information, following through and speaking up.

WULFKUHLE – Having served on both the Kaw Valley and FreeState boards over the last 15 years has given me a great understanding of how the co-op runs. I have chaired several committees and served as secretary and am currently the vice-chairman. I have also served and held offices on the Frontier Farm Credit board where we managed billions in assets.

SLOAN – I have a deep understanding of how the electric industry works — from the different types of generation through transmission and distribution. I understand ratemaking, budgets, and the time necessary to be an engaged and valuable trustee. I also understand the difference in roles of trustees and operational managers.

WHAT MAKES YOU THE IDEAL TRUSTEE?

PHILLIPS – Due to my years of experience, I can double as a historian. I have built meaningful connections with leaders at other cooperatives in the state and nation, which is invaluable for making wise business decisions.

LOHMAN – I am a solid, honest, open-minded person with significant cooperative experience and education. I have the time to serve on the board and be totally engaged in the responsibilities, as well as available to our members.

WULFKUHLE – 15 years of experience working for our members.

SLOAN – I have substantive knowledge of the industry, along with the regulatory agencies and policymakers. I understand strategic planning, budget management and commitment to the members and employees.

Annual Meeting is April 15

It's time to mark your calendars for the next FreeState Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on April 15, 2025, at the McLouth FreeState office (507 N. Union). Members attending will be served a meal while supplies last.

Registration opens, and meal service begins at 5:30 p.m. The cooperative business meeting will begin at 6 p.m. The meeting will also be streamed live on the cooperative website.

AT-LARGE TRUSTEE ELECTION

During the annual meeting, three board members will be elected. FreeState members will vote by an at-large system. Members can vote for any of the nominees in either district. The candidates receiving the most votes in each district will be elected to a three-year term. FreeState is governed by the policies set by our board, all of whom are FreeState cooperative members. Our board connects with our membership and the community at large.

HOW CAN I VOTE?

We understand that not every member can attend the annual meeting, but we want to ensure you can participate in the election. Ballots were mailed March 25, 2025, and must be returned by April 11, 2025. Each FreeState membership gets only one vote, and every member has several voting options available.

- ▶ **VOTING BY MAIL** — Your official ballot will be mailed to you at the end of March. Mark your selections by completely filling in the box next to your choice. **DO NOT MAIL TO THE FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. OFFICE.** Detach and place into the enclosed return envelope. Mail to Survey & Ballot Systems, 7653 Anagram Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. **ENVELOPES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN APRIL 11, 2025.** Please allow sufficient time for delivery.
- ▶ **VOTING BY SMARTHUB** — If you are using your phone, open your SmartHub app, login and click the “Vote Now” button. If you are using a computer, login to your SmartHub online account and click the “Vote Now” button. **VOTING BEGINS MARCH 25, 2025, AND ENDS AT 3 P.M. CT, APRIL 11, 2025.**
- ▶ **VOTING ONLINE** — To access the login page of the official 2025 FreeState Electric Cooperative Inc. election, please type /directvote.net/FSEC into the address bar located at the top of your internet screen. Use the Member Number and your Election Passcode printed on the upper left of the ballot you received in the mail to login. Once registered, follow the online voting instructions. Online voting begins March 25, 2025, and ends 3 p.m. CT, April 11, 2025. **DO NOT MAIL YOUR BALLOT IF YOU PLAN TO VOTE ONLINE.** If you have any problems voting online, please email support@directvote.net.
- ▶ **VOTING IN PERSON** — Vote at the annual meeting on April 15, 2025, in McLouth.
- ▶ **VOTE BY PROXY** — please call our office if you need this option.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE IS THE MEETING?

The meeting will be held in the warehouse of our McLouth office. The address is 507 N. Union, McLouth, Kansas 66054. Parking will be available, and members will be directed as they arrive. There will be handicap accessible parking available near the entrance. Staff will be on hand to assist members who may need additional assistance with mobility.

WHEN CAN I GET INTO THE BUILDING?

Doors to the warehouse will remain CLOSED until 5:30 p.m. Members will not be admitted before 5:30 p.m. This is for members' and staff's safety as final preparations are being made for the meeting. There is no seating available outside the doors of the warehouse. Members arriving earlier than 5:30 p.m. are asked to remain in their vehicles until doors open.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

Registration opens at 5:30 p.m. when the doors open. You will need to provide your service address to the member service representatives to register for the meeting. You must be in attendance to be counted as registered for the meeting. Virtual attendance does not count as registration for the meeting.

WHAT ARE WE EATING FOR DINNER?

The first 250 attendees will be guaranteed a meal. This year the menu is a barbecue sandwich, chips, dessert and a drink.

HOW CAN I EARN MY BILL CREDIT?

You must attend the meeting in person to be counted as registered for the meeting. Virtual attendance does not count as registration for the meeting. Every registered member will receive one \$10 bill credit for attending. The credit is added to the primary account of the member.

WHAT WILL WE DO AT THE MEETING?

Members will vote to approve the minutes from 2024, hear updates from the board of trustees, and the state of the cooperative from the CEO.

Questions about the annual meeting? Give us a call at 800-794-1989 or email customerservice@freestate.coop. We're happy to help!

