



**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

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OFFICE

TEMP. TOPEKA OFFICE

7332 S.W. 21st St.
Topeka, KS 66615
Monday-Thursday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

NOTICE

As our GIS Audit continues, you may see people walking or riding ATVs along the right-of-way or easement areas to take pictures of our infrastructure.

FROM THE CEO

Planning for Future Success

Planning for the future is one of the most important ways that cooperative leadership demonstrates its responsibility to the future of FreeState.

An example of planning for the future is developing a strategic plan. Having a strategic plan is not just setting goals and writing them down. It is the framework that will help leadership and the trustees make sound decisions, stay aligned with our purpose and position FreeState for sustainable growth and success. Industry changes are broad and include the expectations members have when it comes to service and programs to help save money, changes in the regulatory space and even how power is generated. We also recognize the economic climate can be challenging and how we conduct day-to-day business has evolved.

Leadership cannot afford to be reactive. We need a clear direction that reflects both who we are and where we want to go.

This is especially true in a cooperative. Our mission is more than just providing power, although at the core, that's what we do. As a cooperative we are here to serve our members, strengthen communities and build an organization that remains resilient and relevant over time. That kind of stewardship demands leadership that thinks beyond the immediate pressures and looks forward to determining how we can sustain the cooperative.

Trust and transparency are a big part of sustaining the co-op. We believe in being transparent and providing avenues for members to be heard. We also want our employees to thrive, because when our employees are happy our members are taken care of.

Each year the leadership team and trustees meet to create a strategic plan. This helps us align our priorities, guides our decisions and makes certain that the choices we make today will contribute to the future we want to build, long after we are all gone. The strategic plan helps leadership determine what is urgent and what is important to our mission, vision and values. It helps us prioritize and gives the entire co-op a direction so that decisions across teams reinforce one another.

A strategic plan includes goals and initiatives that are based around safety, employees, members, financial stewardship, resilience, technology and innovation, and cooperative



Chris Parr

“Long-term decisions are not easy to make without a crystal ball.”

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Addison Thorne, FreeState's delegate for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, is the daughter of Stephen and Andrea Thorne.

A NOTE FROM ADDISON

A few months ago, I was given the incredible opportunity to join delegates from Kansas, Hawaii and Maine on a tour of our nation's capital while representing FreeState Electric. Because our school had been fortunate enough to send three delegates for three consecutive years, I expected the trip to be memorable. What I never anticipated, however, was that it would become the best week of my life.

American history has always fascinated me, especially the way it has shaped the lives of generations of Americans. Walking through the monuments and memorials honoring those who devoted their lives to our nation's future gave me a deeper appreciation for the freedoms and opportunities I often take for granted. Although every landmark left a lasting impression, the place that impacted me most was the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Even though it was my second visit, the museum once again reminded me how fortunate I am to live in a country where freedom is protected and human dignity is valued. That message became even more meaningful after I had the opportunity to speak with Holocaust survivor Ruth Elenberg Eisenberg, whose story reinforced just how precious those freedoms truly are.

While the history and landmarks were unforgettable, the people I met were what truly made the experience extraordinary. I've been blessed with many wonderful friendships over the years, but during that one week, I found a second family. From holding Karlee's hand during her first flight, to Kasen and Spencer creating our signature handshake, to sharing one final group hug before saying goodbye, every moment strengthened friendships I know will last a lifetime, no matter how many miles separate us. Every monument we explored, every adventure we shared, and every friendship we formed made this journey one I will cherish forever, and I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity.

ADDISON THORNE

YOUTH CONNECT TO *History*



Four standout students from Hawaii, one from Maine and 27 from Kansas were chosen for the 2026 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., held from June 13-19.



Youth Tour kicked off in Topeka with a speech from Trooper Ben, a welcome from notable youth tour alumni, and dinner, followed by an exclusive night tour of the Kansas State Capitol led by Senator Brenda Dietrich and Representative Tobias Schlingensiepen, along with Peter Barstad, director of policy in the Kansas House Majority Leader Chris Croft's office. Afterward, students participated in icebreaker activities to get to know each other better.



While exploring monuments, memorials and museums, students met a Holocaust survivor.



Students met with U.S. Senators Jerry Moran (second from the left above) and Roger Marshall (center standing below) of Kansas, to ask thoughtful questions on a range of topics to gain firsthand insight into the legislative process and the role of elected officials.



RIGHT: Students pose by the Kansas pillar of the National World War II Memorial. Each of the 56 granite pillars represent the District of Columbia and the states, territories and commonwealths of the time. **BELOW:** Students visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.



Beyond the educational experiences, students enjoyed unique opportunities to bond with peers from across the country. **ABOVE:** Delegates saw “Moulin Rouge” at the Kennedy Center.

BELOW: The group enjoyed a Washington Nationals game versus the Kansas City Royals at Nationals Park.



RALLYING CO-OP Spirit!

JOIN US AT AN EVENT NEAR YOU

FreeState is planning to be at the following events in our territory in the coming months. Stop by to visit, pick up a gift and enter to win a bill credit giveaway.

- **SEPT. 19:** Auburn Fair
- **SEPT. 29:** McLouth Volleyball vs. Troy, Mauer Hill
- **OCT. 12:** Tonganoxie Soccer vs. Paola
- **OCT. 13:** Silver Lake Volleyball vs. St. Mary's, Royal Valley
- **OCT. 20:** Washburn Rural Soccer vs. Topeka High
- **OCT. 23:** Mission Valley Football vs. Wabaunsee

Planning for Future Success

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governance. These are all areas of focus where goals are developed, and decisions are made that ultimately come back to the number one question. How will it impact our members?

A major decision, one that was six years in the making, is our facilities project.

Long-term decisions are not easy to make without a crystal ball.

We have to look forward with the information we have today and that means taking careful consideration of risk and reward. Trustees and leaders took time to consider the future goals for the cooperative.

Change is hard. It brought a mix of emotions, but it was a decision that had to be made so we could do what was best for the cooperative and the future of powering our members.

At the end of the day, a strategic plan is more than preparing for growth. It's about stewardship. Leadership has a responsibility to guide the cooperative with clarity, discipline and purpose and when planning is done well, it becomes one of the most important tools we have to protect our mission, serve our members and ensure FreeState's long-term success.

As always, if you have any questions about the content in our pages, we encourage you reach out. You can contact the office at 800-794-1989 or email customerservice@freestate.coop.

FREESTATE'S GIS AUDIT CONTINUES

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc., has contracted with Global Mapping Solutions (GMS) to carry out field audit on the cooperative's infrastructure. This work is referred to as a geographic information system (GIS) audit.

GMS began the GIS audit on Aug. 29, 2025, and is expected to continue working through May 2027.

Please be aware that FreeState has granted permission for GMS to utilize all easements and right-of-way areas pertinent to FreeState service territory to complete this project. Contractors may be seen in pickups and/or ATVs with magnets marked "Contracted by FreeState Electric."

WHAT EXACTLY IS A GIS AUDIT?

A GIS audit locates and inventories each and every piece of equipment used in the infrastructure of the distribution system. GMS will upload photographs of the system and note the exact GPS location.

WHY IS A GIS AUDIT NEEDED?

A GIS audit is considered an essential service for electric cooperatives. The audit verifies or improves the accuracy of the mapping system, and this is critical for systems such as FreeState's metering infrastructure, outage management systems and workforce management.

The goal of the project is accuracy, reliability and the use of best practices. Overall, the audit ensures that FreeState can maximize the benefits derived from our GIS, leading to both immediate and long-term advantages.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR MEMBERS?

A GIS audit improves electric service in the following ways:

- **COST SAVINGS:** More accurate data reduces operational costs, as evidenced by fewer one-call requests (underground line locating), more efficient staking and improved workforce management.
- **ENHANCED EFFICIENCY:** GIS can be used for better planning of projects and should result in fewer field visits.
- **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:** Accurate location data means faster response times and improved infrastructure management.
- **REGULATORY COMPLIANCE:** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance requires specific and accurate locations of infrastructure damage.

Should you have any further questions or need more information, please call the office or visit <https://freestate.pub/GIS>.