

FREESTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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STAFF
Christopher Parr
CEO

OFFICE

1100 S.W. Auburn Road
Topeka, KS 66615
Monday-Thursday
7:00 a.m.-5:30 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

Who Owns the Cooperative? You Do.

Every October, we celebrate Cooperative Month. And while it gives us a good reason to talk about what makes the cooperative business model different, I think sometimes we make it more complicated than it needs to be.

At FreeState, it really comes down to one question. **WHO OWNS THE COOPERATIVE? YOU DO.**

If you receive electric service from FreeState, you aren't just a customer. You're a member, and that means you have an ownership stake in this cooperative.

I think that's something worth celebrating.

There are no outside shareholders at FreeState. The member-elected board of trustees (who are also members) don't make decisions based on what will generate the greatest return for investors. They make decisions that will make our service more reliable, our employees safer and our communities better.

Our responsibility is right here. It's



Chris Parr

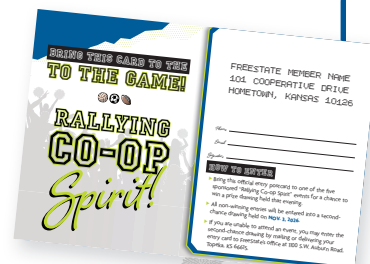
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FILL THE STANDS. SHOW YOUR PRIDE.

WIN A BILL CREDIT.

FreeState member-owners are invited to celebrate Cooperative Month at participating high school games throughout October.

Find your personalized card on the
BACK COVER OF THIS MAGAZINE.



			LOCATION	VS	OPPONENT(S)
TUESDAY	29	SEPTEMBER	MCLOUTH HIGH SCHOOL	VS	TROY MAUER HILL
MONDAY	12	OCTOBER	TONGANOXIE HIGH SCHOOL	VS	PAOLA
TUESDAY	13	OCTOBER	SILVER LAKE HIGH SCHOOL	VS	ST. MARY'S ROYAL VALLEY
TUESDAY	20	OCTOBER	WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL	VS	TOPEKA HIGH
FRIDAY	23	OCTOBER	MISSION VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL	VS	WABAUNSEE

Investing in ‘Ready’

1 mile = nearly \$58,000 —
and that’s the simple version

Most people don’t often think about everything behind the light switch. That’s our job.

You flip it, and you expect the lights to come on.

Making that happen requires much more than the electricity flowing through the meter. Before a single kilowatt-hour can reach your home, FreeState must have an electric distribution system in place — poles, wire, transformers, equipment and people — and that system has to be maintained and ready every hour of every day.

That’s where the **ELECTRIC SERVICE CHARGE (ESC)** comes in.

The ESC is the fixed monthly line item on your bill to have electric service available at your location. Unlike the energy portion of your bill, the ESC doesn’t change based on how many kilowatt-hours you use. Whether you use a lot of electricity, a little, or none at all during the month, the infrastructure serving your location still has to be there and ready when you flip the switch.

WHAT DOES A MILE OF ELECTRIC LINE LOOK LIKE?

One way to understand those fixed costs is to look at what it takes to replace just one mile of existing electric line.

For our example, we started with about the simplest mile we could choose: level terrain and no individual service drops to homes, farms or businesses. Using material costs from January 2026, we calculated what would be required to remove the existing infrastructure and rebuild that mile of line so that it is upgraded to improve reliability.

And there is a lot more involved than simply replacing a few poles.

REMOVING	INSTALLING
Old poles	New poles
Old conductor/wire	New conductor/wire
Old crossarms and hardware	New crossarms and hardware
Other items removed	Other materials installed

And then there are the people who make it happen.

Replacing that single mile requires approximately 269 labor hours — skilled employees operating specialized vehicles and equipment to remove the old infrastructure, construct the new line, make connections, test the system and safely place it into service.

BUT NO 2 MILES ARE THE SAME

Our example is intentionally straightforward. Real-world construction isn’t always so cooperative.

A mile of line crossing rocky or uneven terrain may require



more equipment and labor. Trees and other obstacles can make access more difficult. A line serving multiple homes or businesses requires additional transformers, service drops and equipment. Material prices can also rise or fall depending on supply costs, availability and vendors.

That means there isn't one universal "price per mile" for the electric system.

What doesn't change is the need to maintain it.

Poles eventually need to be replaced. Wire and equipment must be inspected, repaired and upgraded. Trees and vegetation have to be managed. Storm damage has to be repaired. Trucks and specialized equipment must be available, and trained employees must be ready to respond.

YOU'RE PAYING FOR 'READY'

Your energy charge reflects the electricity you use.

The ESC helps support something different: **THE SYSTEM THAT MAKES ELECTRICITY AVAILABLE TO USE.**

This includes the cost of equipment, materials, labor, and overhead expenses.

Think of it as the cost of ready.

- ▶ **READY** when you turn on the lights before sunrise.
- ▶ **READY** when you want the air conditioner on a 100-degree afternoon.
- ▶ **READY** when you plug in a phone at midnight.
- ▶ **READY** even when you've been away and haven't used electricity for days.

There is an entire electric system behind that little switch on the wall.

And keeping that system ready is a job that never really switches off.

HOW THE COSTS ADD UP

To put the cost of maintaining an electric distribution system into perspective, FreeState looked at what it would take to retire and rebuild one mile of existing single-phase electric line.

We intentionally kept the example simple: **LEVEL GROUND, NO SERVICE DROPS AND MATERIAL PRICES AS OF JANUARY 2026.**

First, the existing mile has to come down.

That means retiring **22 POLES — 20 SINGLE-PHASE LINE POLES AND TWO DEAD-END POLES — ALONG WITH 10,500 FEET OF CONDUCTOR (ONE MILE EACH OF NEUTRAL AND PHASE), TWO GUY WIRES, TWO SCREW ANCHORS, SIX GROUND ROD ASSEMBLIES AND 16 GROUND ASSEMBLY PLATES.**

Removing that infrastructure alone requires approximately **96 LABOR HOURS.**

Then, essentially the same infrastructure has to go right back up.

Another 22 poles. Another 10,500 feet of conductor. New anchors, guy wires and grounding equipment.

Building the replacement requires another **173 LABOR HOURS.**

Altogether, that's **269 LABOR HOURS** and nearly **\$58,000** to replace just one mile of line under relatively straightforward conditions.

And that's important: **\$58,000 ISN'T A STANDARD PRICE FOR A MILE OF ELECTRIC LINE.** It's a snapshot.

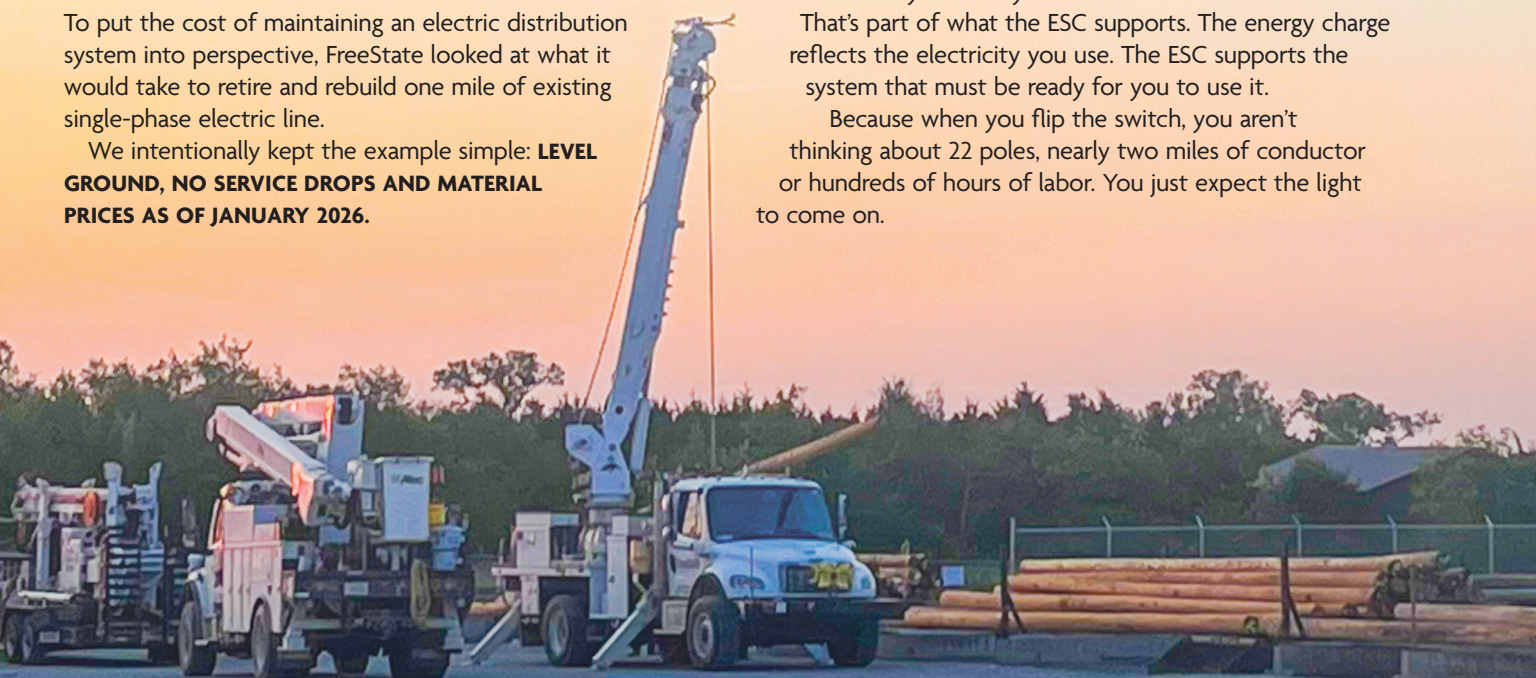
Material prices change. Difficult terrain can require additional equipment and labor. Trees, rocks, waterways and limited access can complicate construction. Service drops to individual homes, farms and businesses add equipment and labor. Different line configurations can require additional materials. Any deviation from a straight line adds more poles and guy wires.

The actual cost of rebuilding any particular mile can therefore be considerably different.

But the example helps illustrate something that doesn't change — maintaining an electric system takes a substantial amount of infrastructure and skilled labor — even when the end result may look very much like what was there before.

That's part of what the ESC supports. The energy charge reflects the electricity you use. The ESC supports the system that must be ready for you to use it.

Because when you flip the switch, you aren't thinking about 22 poles, nearly two miles of conductor or hundreds of hours of labor. You just expect the light to come on.



Who Owns the Cooperative? You Do. *Continued from page 12A ►*

a responsibility to the members and communities we serve.

And when you think about it, that's a pretty unique relationship.

The poles, wires, substations and other infrastructure we all invest in are here to serve you. The margins we earn are reinvested into your cooperative, and when the financial condition of the cooperative allows, capital credits are returned to members. Getting money back these days deserves a celebration!

It all comes back to ownership.

This October, we're taking that message on the road with our **RALLYING THE CO-OP SPIRIT** campaign.

Rather than asking everyone to come to us for one big event, we're coming to you. We'll be joining communities across our service territory at area high school sporting events, offering free admission, handing out FreeState rally

towels while supplies last, and giving members an opportunity to enter a bill credit drawing. It's a chance for us to meet you and your family where you are (and cheer on our local kids).

High school sports seemed like a natural fit for Cooperative Month because there are a lot of similarities between a strong community rallying around high school athletics and rallying behind your cooperative.

Neither happens because of one person.

It takes people showing up. It takes teamwork. It takes everyone doing their part. And it takes a little hometown pride.

That's the same spirit that has built electric cooperatives for generations.

FreeState exists today because people in our communities came together and decided they could

accomplish something collectively that would have been difficult to accomplish individually. Nearly 90 years later, that idea is still at the heart of what we do.

Our cooperative has changed a lot over those years, and it will continue to change. Technology changes. Our communities grow. The needs of our members evolve. **BUT ONE THING DOESN'T CHANGE: THIS COOPERATIVE BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.**

So, when you see us at a game this October, stop by and say hello. Grab a rally towel. Cheer on your hometown team and celebrate Cooperative Month with us.

Because we're not just rallying around our schools and communities. We're rallying around something we all share.

YOUR COOPERATIVE. WHO OWNS IT? YOU DO.

FREESTATE'S GIS AUDIT CONTINUES

FreeState has contracted with Global Mapping Solutions (GMS) to carry out a 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>.