



**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

Randy Richards
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

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%. Source: energy.gov

FROM THE CEO

A Career Committed to Members

As CEO, I spend a lot of time building relationships and it is one of the best parts of my job. I'm blessed to lead FreeState Electric Cooperative where we are a big family, and a team of individuals who wholeheartedly believe we work for each of you. Many of the folks at your cooperative have spent years powering your lives and have built long, successful careers in the electric cooperative industry.

RANDY RICHARDS, an assistant general manager, is one of those people. With a great deal of gratitude for his 39 years of service, I share that on Jan. 3, Richards officially retired from the cooperative.

To say I am incredibly grateful for his many accomplishments and leadership is an understatement. Richards has been committed to the cooperative's mission, vision and values since 1980 with Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative and extended that knowledge and dedication to the cooperative after the consolidation created FreeState.

As he moves on from the role of assistant general manager, Richards remains a mentor and friend to many of his colleagues in Topeka and McLouth, as well as the cooperative industry, his community of Silver Lake and beyond.

Richards spent most of his life serving our members in some capacity. He started his career as an apprentice

lineman with Kaw Valley in 1980 after graduating from Manhattan Technical College, and in 1982 became a journeyman lineman.



Steve Foss

In 1989, he was promoted to the director of purchasing, inventory and safety. In 1999 Richards completed the NRECA Loss Control Internship Program earning his Certified Loss Control Professional (CLCP) certification and a promotion to manager of safety and material management. In 2014, he was promoted again to manager of safety, compliance and resources, and following the consolidation vote in April 2016 he was named assistant general manager where he oversaw the engineering, operations, safety, compliance and resources departments. To say Richards will be missed is an understatement.

From the time I met him in 2014, Richards embraced the concept of change, always open to new opportunities benefiting members and employees. His knowledge and career path made his perspective a unique one and has been valuable to not only me, but each of our employees. Joining the executive team in 2016, Richards pushed us to continually adapt to

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Trustee Election

Cooperative Prepares for Important Step in Governance

Each year the members elect new trustees to the FreeState Board of Trustees and it is time to again begin the election process. Our trustees are an integral part of our cooperative as they have a fiduciary duty to shareholders 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 this year 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 then 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.



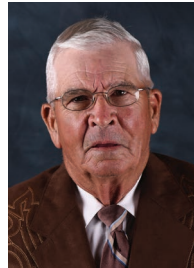
LARRY BUTEL
Overbrook



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.



DEAR MATT,

I KNOW YOU TYPICALLY GIVE US SOME TIPS FOR SAVING MONEY, BUT WHAT ABOUT SAFETY? WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN KEEP MY FAMILY SAFE IF I'M USING ALTERNATIVE HEAT SOURCES?

This is a great question as we move toward the coldest part of the year. Many folks utilize space heaters or portable heat sources in their homes this time of year, and we can't forget about electric blankets or heated mattress pads. Just remember that although they work great for confined spaces, heating your home with a space heater can still be costly. They are great for keeping a small space warm, but you still have to plug them in, which means they are using energy and increasing your electric usage. Pay attention to the wattage on the device and keep in mind they are most beneficial in smaller spaces.

When we're using these items it's also important to think about safety. These items can be dangerous if we don't take precautions while using them. Keep these devices away from pets and children to prevent accidental burns. Follow these safety tips this winter for keeping your family safe.

- ▶ Ensure space heaters are in good repair.
- ▶ Do not use an extension cord to power a space heater. Plug it directly into the electrical outlet.
- ▶ Space heaters should have an automatic shut-off in the event they tip over.
- ▶ Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from curtains, draperies, loose paper and upholstery.
- ▶ Keep space heaters out of reach from small children and pets.
- ▶ Never use heaters as drying racks.
- ▶ If a heater is running on fuel, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully for ventilation needs.
- ▶ Keep chimneys and flues free from corrosion or blockages.
- ▶ Do not tuck your electric blanket under the mattress.
- ▶ Utilize automatic turn-off features if possible to prevent accidentally leaving the device on and unattended.
- ▶ Do not allow pets to sleep on electric blankets.
- ▶ Extension cords used for outdoor weather tools should be approved for outdoor use.
- ▶ Always follow manufacturer's instructions on any heating device.

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. These experiences guide students to develop leadership and communication skills important to becoming employable adults. 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

Applications received by the **DEADLINE OF FEB. 10, 2020**, will be reviewed and scored.

Students who are interested in applying can find **MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/YOUTH**.

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

FROM THE CEO

A Career Committed to Members *Continued from page 16A* ▶

meet the most pressing needs of the cooperative members. He has been an inspiring change maker and one we are honored to have worked with on your behalf.

While we thank Richards for the years of service and leadership in advancing the cooperative's mission, and for forging strong, trusting relationships with our partners, we also want to thank his family for sharing him with us for all these years. His wife, Kathy, and daughters Danielle, Megan and Randi, have sacrificed time with their husband and father so he could spend time working to power your lives



Randy Richards retired on January 3, 2020, after 39 years of service to Kaw Valley and FreeState electric cooperatives.

for so long. He'll be giving back some of that time in retirement, and we couldn't be more excited for the entire Richards family.

Cheers to your well-earned retirement. What you have brought to the members, staff and trustees of both Kaw Valley and FreeState electric cooperatives is invaluable. You have been one of the foundations of the cooperative's success and you leave behind a legacy that will continue for

years to come.

The co-op won't be the same without you. Congratulations, good friend and I'm sure we'll see you soon.

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

FreeState Cold Weather Policy

As a FreeState Electric Cooperative member, it is important you are aware how unpaid heating bills are managed.

The original Cold Weather Rule was established by the Kansas Corporation Commission and restricted electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31, when temperature forecasts were for 35 degrees or below.

Since 1996, individual Kansas electric cooperatives have been responsible for establishing cold weather policies that are appropriate for their individual cooperatives.

FreeState does not participate in the cold weather rule. While temperature is no longer the governing factor, it does remain an important factor in disconnecting for nonpayment of accounts.

Past due accounts are addressed on a monthly basis so that a large unpaid balance for winter heating costs is not carried forward to the summer cooling season. If you find yourself in circumstances where you are unable to pay your full heating bill during the winter months, please call the cooperative at 800-794-1989. Postponing contacting FreeState could result in disconnection of your electric service. Member service representatives can explain options that may be available to you, like the Pre-Pay Program.

For more information on this program, visit www.freestate.coop/prepay.