



**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

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

Putting hot food in the refrigerator makes it work harder, and uses more energy. Allow food to cool before placing in the refrigerator to save energy.

Source: energy.gov

FROM THE CEO

Voting for Your Voice

We have arrived at what we at the cooperative like to call annual meeting season, the time of year when we prepare for our annual meeting. Each year, we report the financial health of the cooperative, elect trustees and gather together to celebrate another successful year. We begin by planning the trustee elections.

As part of a cooperative, the trustees guide the business on your behalf. Each month, they examine challenges facing the industry and determine how issues will impact all consumer-members. The decisions made in the board room will determine rates, work plans and programs. Trustees have a great responsibility, committing time and effort to our members and the communities we serve. And, they take great care in every decision.

This is why using your voice to vote in the trustee election is so important. It's what makes the cooperative unique. It's your chance to have your voice heard. You have one vote, so use it wisely. Be diligent when choosing a candidate. Take time to read their biographical information or ask questions about the candidates. These are your neighbors, friend and community leaders and they have chosen to step up for the chance to lead your cooperative.

Each year, we have a nominating committee tasked with choosing qualified candidates from the applicants and presenting members with a slate

of qualified candidates. I can tell you that our committee takes recruitment of trustees seriously.

On Feb. 4, the nominating committee gathered to determine the 2020 slate presented to you. Inside this issue, you'll find that information. We'll also provide this in our April issue with more details regarding the annual meeting because we want you to be informed before you make your selections.

This year, you can expect your ballots to be delivered around April 1. The timing of this publication allows us to introduce the candidates to you this month and provide more information next month to help you decide who to vote for your representation.

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



Steve Foss

**Voting for
your voice
through
the trustee
election
is what
makes the
cooperative
unique.**

2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Voting Information

Trustee Candidate Profiles and How To Cast Your Vote Starting April 2

Join us at the annual meeting of FreeState Electric Cooperative on April 21, 2020, at Perry-Lecompton High School. Consumer-members attending the annual meeting will receive a \$10 bill credit on their electric bill. There will also be a chance to win great door prizes. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. with a meal and the business meeting beginning at 7 p.m.

At-Large Trustee Election

On Feb. 4, 2020, members of the FreeState nominating committee, appointed by the board of trustees, met to present candidates for election to the FreeState board. The candidates listed are to be presented to the membership for consideration at the upcoming annual meeting on April 21.

During the annual meeting, four board members will be elected. FreeState members will vote by an at-large system. Members can vote for any of the nominees in any district.

The 2019 trustee positions up for election are as follows:

East District Trustees

- ▶ **RUSSELL FRENCH**
- ▶ **MICHAEL MCNARY**
- ▶ **JEANINE MURPHY** (incumbent)
- ▶ **RALPH PHILLIPS** (incumbent)

West District Trustees

- ▶ **LARRY BUTEL** (incumbent)
- ▶ **CAROL MARPLE**
- ▶ **DON MONTGOMERY** (incumbent)
- ▶ **DENNIS REED**
- ▶ **NATE REWERTS**
- ▶ **TOM SLOAN**

The two candidates with the most votes in each district will be elected to the board of trustees. The second

position in the East District will be a two-year term. This will then put the board on a three-year, three trustee voting rotation due to the odd number of trustees.

FreeState is governed by the policies set by our board, all of whom are FreeState cooperative consumer-members. Our board provides a vital connection with our membership and the community at large.

How can I vote?

We understand that not every consumer-member can attend the annual meeting, but we want to make sure you can participate in the election.

- Each FreeState member gets only one vote and every member has three voting options available.
- ▶ Vote in person at the annual meeting
 - ▶ Vote by mail-in ballot
 - ▶ Vote by proxy

Vote at the Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at Perry-Lecompton High School Theater. Members will be issued a ballot when they register if they have not voted by mail prior to the meeting.

Vote by Mail

Ballots will be mailed beginning April

2, 2020, and will need to be returned by April 17, 2020, to ensure they are counted. It is easy to vote by mail. Simply complete the ballot using the instructions listed and return as directed in the postage-paid envelope provided. Please return the ballot using the postage-paid envelope. Do not bring ballots to the office.

Vote by Proxy

If you cannot attend the annual meeting and you forget to mail your ballot in time, you can vote by proxy.

Complete the proxy form online at www.freestate.coop/annualmeeting and give it to another FreeState member or adult relative in the same home and they can cast the vote for you.

Who do I vote for?

Candidate biographical information is printed on the following pages and will be reprinted in the April magazine for your reference. It will also be included with mailed ballots. The information printed has been provided by the candidates.

For more information about the meeting please visit our website WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/ANNUALMEETING OR EMAIL US AT CUSTOMERSERVICE@FREESTATE.COOP.

2020 Trustee Election: Candidate Profiles

East District

RUSSELL FRENCH

Lawrence

Russell French, Lawrence, has been a cooperative member for 22 years,



Russell French

and is a semi-retired owner of R&R Communications, Inc., providing structured voice and data cable plant designs for commercial entities.

"I believe my customer service experience and relationships with employees, vendors and subcontractors, would be a beneficial experience to me as a trustee," French said.

French served in the United States Air Force from 1968 to 1997 and has extensive training in electronics and computer equipment with a diverse background in customer service, product support, planning, consulting and project management. In 2000, French founded R&R Communications, Inc., in Lawrence. French says he learned a great deal about personnel, compliance with policies and regulations, governance, and managing a successful business.

East District

MICHAEL McNARY

Meriden

Michael McNary has been a FreeState member for 21 years



Michael McNary

and a Farmers Insurance Agent for the past 23 years.

As a business professional and former employee of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (1990 to 1997), McNary understands the importance of safe and reliable electric service to rural areas and communities.

McNary wants to help the cooperative in its continued efforts to improve technology and education and says that being available to all members to listen and work together is crucial to solving problems and addressing challenges.

"By working together, the cooperative will be stronger and continue to be successful for years to come," said McNary.

He is a past Meriden City Council member and now serves as the chairperson for the Meadowlark Extension District of Jefferson, Jackson, and Nemaha counties. He also serves on the 4-H Program Development Council.

McNary is vice president of Vawter, Vauter, and Vaughter Family Association, and is a member of Knights of Columbus at St. Aloysius Catholic Church assisting with fundraising and community activities.

East District

JEANINE MURPHY

Leavenworth (I)

Jeanine Murphy has been a lifetime co-op member. She has served on the



Jeanine Murphy

board for 13 years, serving as the FreeState board president for the past two years.

She currently serves as the director of curriculum for USD No. 449.

She has completed the course to become Director Gold Certified by the National Rural Electric Co-op Association, has completed education requirements for Credentialed Co-op Director and also has completed the National Rural Electric Co-op Association's Board Leadership Certification.

Murphy lives in rural Leavenworth and has one son and four grandchildren. She says she is very proud of the youth program that FreeState offers because she believes it will pay dividends in the future to help educate our youngest members.

"As a trustee, I am representing my family, my neighbors, and my community to make certain affordable, safe, and reliable electricity is available," said Murphy. "Equally important to me is FreeState's concern for community. As a trustee, I am very proud of what we have done to promote rural Kansas, and the organizations that serve the area. I would like to continue to support FreeState's efforts in these areas as a trustee."

East District

RALPH PHILLIPS

Mayetta (I)

Ralph Phillips has been a co-op member for 46 years, 34 of those



Ralph Phillips

he has also served as a co-op trustee. He owns and operates Phillips Dairy.

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 board. He has also served as the president of the Kansas Electrical Co-op Board.

During his service on the board, Phillips has witnessed many changes. He enjoys working with the other board members to make decisions that benefit the member-owners of the co-op and continues to make FreeState one of the most progressive boards in the state.

He and his wife, Phyllis, live in rural Mayetta. They are parents to five children who have blessed them with 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

"Right now, I am very excited about the future of the electric industry and co-ops as a whole," said Phillips. "In my time of serving, we continually take strides to make sure each member is provided with the service they need with the product they have come to expect. I have always felt that our board has put members as the priority and will continue to do just that."

2020 Trustee Election: Candidate Profiles

West District

LARRY BUTEL

Overbrook (I)

Larry Butel, Overbrook, has been a member since 1989, and has served on the board since 2004, serving as treasurer for



Larry Butel

the past two years. Butel is a farmer and rancher, raising cattle, row crops, wheat and hay under Butel Farm, Inc.

He believes being available to answer questions and provide information to members is one of the most important responsibilities of a trustee.

"I value the cooperative business model and want to continue to serve our members, helping to manage the co-op for their best interest," said Butel.

Butel is a member of the Overbrook Rotary Club, coordinator for Cornerstone Family Schools Track and Field, graduate of Osage County Leadership, and a Sunday school teacher for Overbrook and Worden United Methodist Church.

He has served in leadership roles for the Kansas State Bank of Overbrook Board, Cornerstone Family Schools, the Watershed Joint #35, Gideons Int'l, Farmer's Cooperative Association, Farm Service Agency, Extension Council, Overbrook United Methodist Church, Osage County Livestock Association, Wilshire Investment Club, and the Kansas Livestock Association.

West District

CAROL MARPLE

Wakarusa

Carol Marple, Wakarusa, has been a member for 45 years. Marple is a retired rural mail carrier. She is also a partner in the family



Carol Marple

farming operation and has been since 1975. She is a member of the FreeState Operation Round-Up member committee, a member of the Auburn Housing Authority, affordable housing for senior citizens, and a past member of Shawnee Start-ups, and the Shawnee County Farm Service Agency board. She has also served on several boards within Shawnee County Extension, including the executive board. Marple says engagement is a must as a trustee, and she is well networked in the area with current co-op members.

"There is no better way to gain and share information than by meeting people face to face," said Marple.

West District

DON MONTGOMERY

Burlingame (I)

Don Montgomery, Burlingame, has been a cooperative member for 30 years. He has served on the FreeState board



Don Montgomery

as secretary the past two years.

Montgomery is a retired vocational agriculture teacher and is currently a farmer and rancher.

Montgomery has seen many changes in the cooperative, and believes we are better and stronger than ever before. His goal is to represent all members and will continue making himself available to members when any questions arise.

"To educate members first, you need to have the information to answer the questions," said Montgomery. "Attending board meetings, strategic planning sessions, and director education classes or industry meetings has allowed me to acquire the knowledge to be a source of information. My priority is the cooperative members."

Montgomery serves on the Southeast Kansas State Farm Management Association Board and the Burlingame Cemetery Board. In the past he has served on the Kansas State Extension State Advisory Board and was president of the Osage County Extension Board. He is currently a Credentialed Cooperative Director, holding Director Gold Certification, and Board Leadership Credentials.

West District

DENNIS REED

Topeka

Dennis Reed, Topeka, has been a cooperative member for one year. As a consultant for his own business, Midwest



Dennis Reed

Regulatory

Consulting, LLC, for the past four years, Reed helps utilities work with transmission issues.

Prior to starting his own consulting group, Reed retired from Westar Energy after 41 years of service working with overhead line design and standards in engineering, rates, load research, transmission operations, and for the last 15 years regulatory services and transmission tariff issues. During the last 10 years of employment he chaired the Regional Tariff Working Group at the Southwest Power Pool.

"I feel that I can provide a perspective related to regional issues, renewables, and the changing wholesale energy industry supply," said Reed.

Reed said that a combination of in-person contacts with members, as well as being available via email are important responsibilities of board members.

For the past four years, Reed has served on the board of directors for DeMolay International, and he has also been involved in the Topeka Lodge #17 of Masonry, Order of Eastern Star, DeMolay International, and the Southwest Power Pool.

West District

NATHAN REWERTS

Topeka

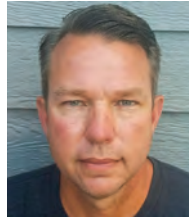
Nathan Rewerts, Topeka, has been a cooperative member for 19 years.

As an investment adviser, Rewerts understands the importance of planning and taking a strategic approach to investing for financial security.

Rewerts serves as the assistant fire chief of the Shawnee County Fire Department District No. 4 and is the secretary/treasurer of Consolidated Rural Water District No. 1.

"I am often called upon to answer questions and educate members of both of the entities I currently serve," said Rewerts. "I believe that members need brief and concise answers to their questions or concerns. Being engaged in my cooperative would help me serve and educate my neighbors and other members."

Rewerts also is a K9 handler on Kansas Task Force K9 and is also the planning team manager and task force leader on Kansas Task Force 2.



Nathan Rewerts

West District

TOM SLOAN

Lawrence

Tom Sloan, Lawrence, has been a member for 38 years.

He is a retired farmer, owning a registered Columbia sheep flock and growing hay, corn and beans. Sloan served in the Kansas Legislature for 24 years before retiring in 2019.

During Sloan's legislative term he focused on energy, telecom and water policies. Sloan chaired and served on relevant Kansas committees, hosting chairpersons and members of Federal agencies.

"FreeState is well managed and I want my knowledge and experience to help guide the organization," said Sloan.

Sloan says as a former legislator he has experience communicating with constituents and would continue to provide open communication with members.

Sloan has served the Douglas County Rural Water District No. 1 for 35 years. He has also served the National Suffolk Sheep Association, Department of Energy Electricity Advisory Committee, Federal Communication Commission Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, the EPA Local Government Advisory Committee, and Lawrence Memorial Hospital.

"Serving on federal agency advisory committees, I brought information back to Kansas stakeholders and conveyed ideas from Kansans," Sloan said.



Tom Sloan

REMEMBER WHEN THE Lights Came On



As we talk about a new energy and the future of cooperatives, we also want to connect with our past to feature stories describing the time when the co-op brought power to the farm, ranch or residence. Perhaps it's a memory of your first electric appliance, or your ability to use electricity in barns or shops. We want to share your stories with our members.

Georgie Stebbins

Do you remember when the lights came on brought back so many memories for me.

I was born in July 1928 on a farm 10 miles north of Lawrence in the Valley Grove community. No one in the community had electricity or water systems in their homes.

We studied by the light of a kerosene lamp and did our farm chores carrying a kerosene lantern. I was about 6 years old when I decided sewing dresses for my doll by hand was too slow so I would use mom's old treadle sewing machine. I had to stand up on one foot and treadle with the other. When I started high school, I made most of my school clothes on that old sewing machine.

The high school cheer club uniforms were red corduroy jumpers and white blouses. My blouse was white satin. I just struggled ironing that with my mom's flat iron, which I still have.

My late husband, M.L. "Bood", and I moved to our farm on Ferguson Road in January 1951. There was just one outlet in each room of the house, but we had electricity!

In January 1953 our Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Cooperative bill was \$7.96. In June 1959, we purchased our first freezer, a 20-foot Norge from Cecil Luse (McLouth) paying \$345. My treadle machine sewing came to an end when "Bood" surprised me with an electric Phoenix automatic sewing machine in 1957. Such a joy!

Thank you FreeState for keeping the lights on for the Stebbins family for 68 years.

SUBMIT YOUR STORIES OR PHOTOS FROM THE PAST TO:

FreeState Electric
Attn: Marketing
PO Box 70
McLouth, KS 66054



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,
WHERE DOES ALL MY ENERGY GO? I
FEEL LIKE MY BILL JUST KEEPS GETTING
HIGHER, BUT I KNOW IT'S MY USAGE
AND NOT THE ACTUAL PRICE. WHAT
AREAS CAN I START CUTTING BACK TO
SAVE SOME MONEY?**

Your question is timely! I get asked this question multiple times a month, so I wanted to go ahead and write about where your energy goes. Keep in mind that when I say energy, I am referring to any energy used in the home, not just electricity. Take, for example, home heating. Although some homes have electric heat, many in our area use propane, a few burn wood and where available, some use natural gas. With home solar becoming common, you may also be getting energy from your own panels, as well.

I have included a graph this month that shows home total energy consumption. Now, keep in mind that this data is average, and Kansas uses more on heating/cooling than other states. Your average could be different than this chart. It all depends on your lifestyle and the number of people you have in your home. This graph is to illustrate how your energy breaks out within an average home, and it may not be exact to your situation.

Heating a home takes the most energy. If you add in cooling, we're up to about 32% of energy usage. The chart also shows that electronics consume a relatively high amount of energy, and that number continues to grow. This is due to most things we buy today consume at least a small amount of energy even when off, and we have more things to plug in.

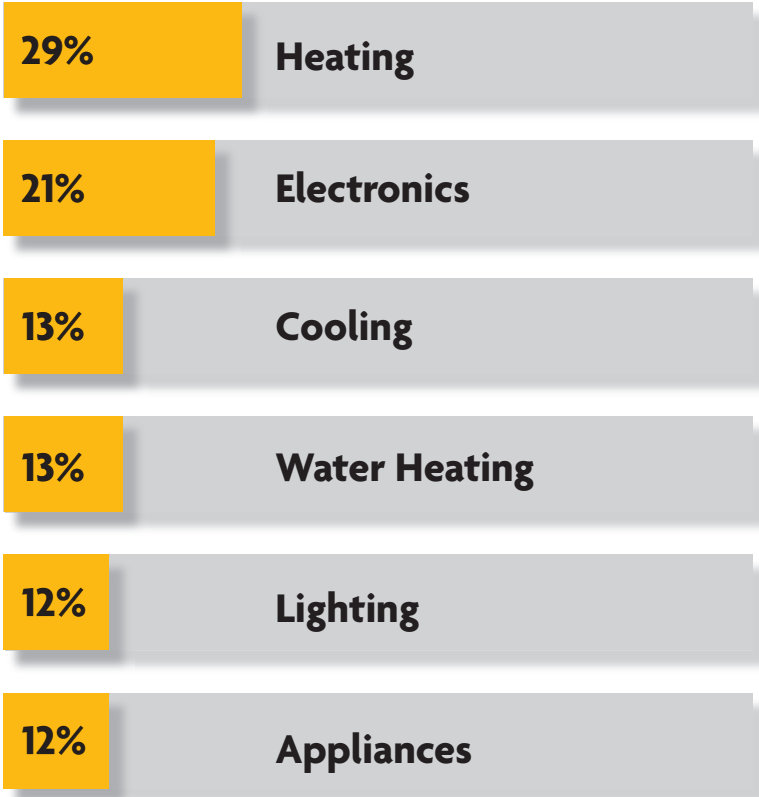
Think about the last thing you purchased. Did it have a power cord? Chances are, yes, it did. We just have more things plugged in than we did 25 years ago. However, we are seeing a reduction in overall residential energy usage. The electronics portion of our energy usage is increasing.

Here's a challenge for you. Take a look at your bill, and then compare it to five years ago. The price of electricity was the same as it is today, but where is your usage? Compare what you used then, to what you use now. I think you might

be surprised at how much usage has increased in just five years.

The chart shows that water heating, lighting and appliances are all relatively equal. If you utilize LED lightbulbs, you can bring the 12% lighting portion down.

So, when you ask where your energy is going, think about what you do daily. What do you have plugged in? What is your thermostat set on? What kind of lightbulbs do you use? Stay tuned. Next month, I'll go into more detail about the small things you can do at home to help reduce usage and save you money!



Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, April 2013

Statement of Nondiscrimination

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc., is not subject to the jurisdiction, regulation, supervision and control of the Kansas Corporation Commission, except as specified in K.S.A. 66-104d(f).

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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PRE-PAY PROGRAM

The Easier Way To Pay

FreeState's Pre-Pay Program doesn't replace the cold weather rule. And, is not only used for payment arrangements. It's available to all consumer-members who want to conserve and save money all year long.

Did you know that since 1996, individual Kansas electric cooperatives have been responsible for establishing seasonal rules appropriate for their cooperatives? The Kansas Corporation Commission does not govern cooperatives; they are self-governed by a board of trustees.

The FreeState trustees made a decision to not participate in the Cold Weather Rule, and here is why.

The Cold Weather Rule actually hurts consumer-members who choose not to pay their bill from November to March because of the constant state of debt they found themselves in. It was a daunting task to pay back hundreds of dollars of past-due bills, added to hundreds of dollars of current bills. The cycle repeated and it wasn't helping our members get ahead.

The other way this practice hurt our members was the cost. As a distribution cooperative, we purchase power for you to use. If a portion of our members doesn't pay us for what they used, someone has to pay for it — and a lot of times it was redistributed to the rest of the cooperative members.

When we eliminated the cold weather rule we eliminated payment arrangements and utilized our Pre-Pay Program as a way to help our members stay connected, pay past amounts, and pay for their used energy.

The Pre-Pay program is more than a way to pay your bill. It's a way to conserve energy, maintain a monthly budget, go green and paperless, and avoid deposits and late fees!

Conserve Energy

Did you know you can save energy by utilizing the Pre-Pay Program? Members who enrolled in our pre-pay program saw approximately a 12% reduction in usage. Why? Because they were more aware of what they were using each day. The less you use, the less you pay. By monitoring usage on the SmartHub app it's easy to see when you utilize the most electricity and what you may be able to reduce by just flipping a switch to off or unplugging something you aren't using!

Maintain Your Budget

Each day your balance will be adjusted based on your usage the previous day. When you get to a balance of \$30 or less, an email is generated that reminds you to make a payment.

Avoid Deposits and Fees

The Pre-Pay Program is pay-as-you-go with no deposits or late fees. Enroll in the program with a minimum deposit of \$50 toward future electricity.

You can make minimum payments of \$20 daily, weekly, or monthly to maintain a credit balance on your account and avoid service disruption.

Going Green. Going Paperless.

When you are enrolled in the pre-pay program you no longer receive a paper bill, and your account information is available 24/7 online or via the SmartHub app. With a few clicks you can access your account balance, usage, and information. You can make or schedule payments at your convenience.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE PRE-PAY PROGRAM VISIT
WWW.FREESTATE.COOP OR CALL
800-794-1989.**