



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

501 S. Huston Ave, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330  
866-784-5500  
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

# TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Ron Holsteen General Manager

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**Office Hours**  
**Monday-Friday**  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Contact Us**  
501 S. Huston Ave., P.O. Box 368  
Altamont, KS 67330  
620-784-5500  
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## Holiday Office Closing

The Twin Valley Electric office will be closed in observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 3.

**Have a Safe  
Holiday!**

## From the Manager

This spring, the board engaged a consultant to prepare a study of the cooperative's costs of providing electric service and the rates charged for this service. The purpose of this study was to determine the revenue needed to cover the cooperative's operating expenses and debt obligations and to examine the equitability of rates among the various customer classes.

One of the primary reasons for conducting this study was the significant increases Twin Valley has incurred in our wholesale power costs in recent years. The chart below shows our annual wholesale power costs since 2003.

The large increase in 2011 was due to both a wholesale rate increase put into effect by Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPC), our wholesale power supplier, and to the high summer demand set last summer by our members.

### Annual Wholesale Power Costs

Year	kWh Purchased	Total Power Costs	Average Cost/kWh	% Increase
2003	30,430,956	\$1,813,163	\$0.0596	NA
2004	30,768,264	\$1,799,753	\$0.0585	-1.8%
2005	34,520,861	\$2,108,747	\$0.0611	4.4%
2006	36,133,195	\$2,287,958	\$0.0633	3.7%
2007	38,949,304	\$2,291,596	\$0.0588	-7.1%
2008	40,429,858	\$2,548,971	\$0.0630	7.2%
2009	40,312,884	\$2,566,543	\$0.0637	1.0%
2010	43,120,996	\$2,921,950	\$0.0678	6.4%
2011	43,350,323	\$3,461,099	\$0.0798	17.8%
2012 to July	24,018,945	\$2,032,595	\$0.0846	6.0%

Unfortunately, governmental regulations and normal inflationary cost pressures are continually causing electric generation and transmission costs to increase. Ultimately, increased costs have to be passed on to you, our members, resulting in higher electric bills.



Ron Holsteen

This summer started out much like last summer with very high usage by our members. The July electric bills were among the highest ever for many members. However, our energy consumption has dropped significantly since mid-August and it appears that our billing demand for wholesale power will be lower than the demand set last summer. This will help keep our wholesale power costs more stable for the next several months.

A rate increase will be needed and the board will set a date and time for a meeting to discuss and vote upon any rate change. This meeting will be open to the membership. A notice of the meeting will be included in the next issue of *Kansas Country Living*. If you have any questions about the rate study or for information on ways you can help reduce your home's energy use, contact our office at 866-784-5500.

NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

# Moving with the Times



William Worthy

Quite often, your Twin Valley linemen get calls from members who are experiencing blinking lights or other electrical problems at their residence or other meter location. Some-

times it is a problem on Twin Valley's side, such as trees that have grown and are coming into contact with the line or birds by the hundreds landing on, or taking off from, a line adjacent to a field that is being harvested. Sometimes we can find these problems right away, but sometimes it is a needle in a haystack and we have to spend time patrolling and inspecting until we find the problem. Nevertheless, rest assured, your Twin Valley linemen will find and repair the problem as soon as possible.

Another problem we are running into, and it is becoming more frequent, is problems on the member's side of the meter. The average age of the homes in

Labette County, is just under 57 years old. If you take that 57 years and break down many of the things we use on a day-to-day basis, you might be surprised at how many things we buy and then replace.

In that 57 years, the average household has gone through seven automobiles, five water heaters, four refrigerators and nearly six window unit air conditioners...and don't get me started on TVs, microwaves, stereos, etc. We spend money to replace the things we use and touch that seem to make the most impact on our lives, or so we think.

Of all the things I just listed, what do the majority of them have in common? Electricity. I know automobiles run off gasoline, diesel or propane, but what do you plug the block warmer into or the battery charger on that cold winter morning? That's right, the wall socket that is connected to the wiring, that connects to the breaker or fuse box, that connects to the meter can. The breaker box and meter can, that

has sat quietly and faithfully, distributing the electricity to your house and shop, without fail, can be a problem waiting to happen.

Let's start with the meter can. First of all, it is outside, exposed to the elements, contracting when it is cold, expanding when it gets hot, all the while feeding the breaker or fuse box, quietly and inconspicuously. Just because the paint is faded or worn, doesn't mean the meter can is faulty or needs replacing. The socket on the inside is the primary component that may give you problems, however this is very rare.

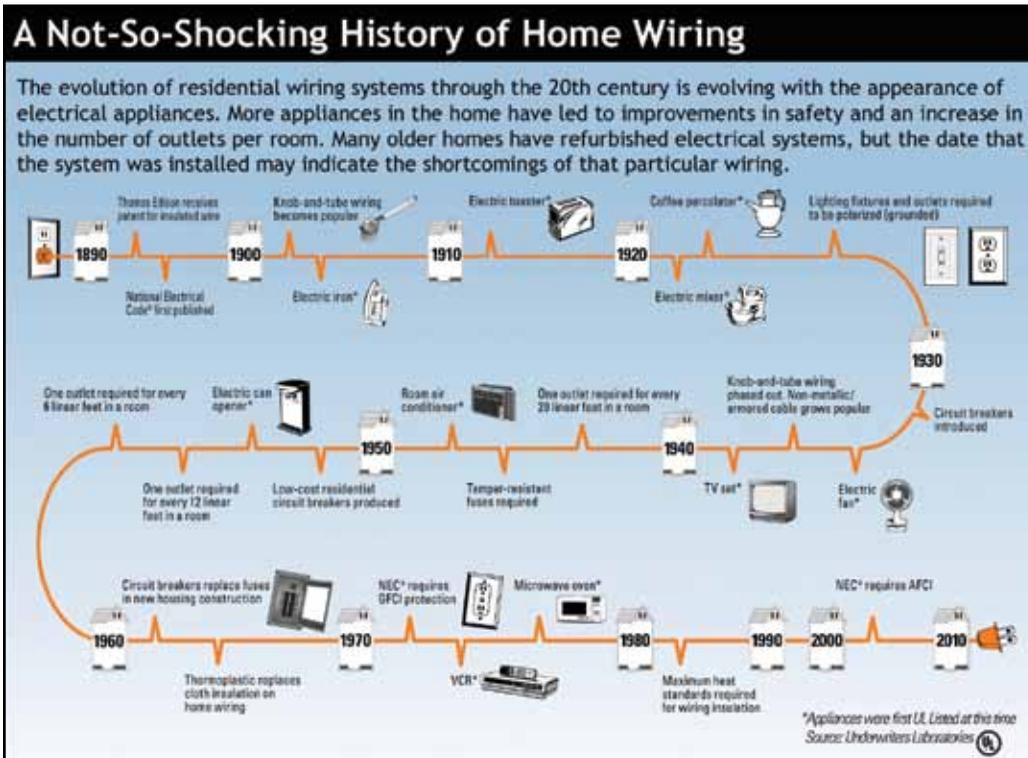
As we move to the breaker box, think about what the house had in it when it was constructed, and what it has now. Initially, you might have had one or two plugs in each room, a ceiling light and a couple of other things like attic and ventilation fans.

Now, look around your house and see what has changed. A window unit air conditioner or even a central a/c unit to make the home comfortable, a TV in every room, satellite receivers,

computers, freezers, chargers and no kitchen is complete without the latest "set it and forget it" cooking conveniences. All of these things are served by equipment that has sat faithfully all these years and never given you a problem. However, as we all know, the hands of time have kept ticking and nothing is immune from age.

Therefore, if you think you might have added several things or are planning on adding or changing what your meter serves, give us a call and we will work with you, upgrading your service or advising you on what a licensed electrician needs to do on your side.

As always, I welcome questions or comments and can be reached at [wworthy@wavewls.com](mailto:wworthy@wavewls.com). See you next month.



## Tamper Resistant Receptacles Can Save Lives

Each year, nearly 2,400 children are treated in hospitals for shocks and burns from tampering with electrical outlets. Most of these injuries are the result of small children placing ordinary household objects into the outlets with disastrous consequences. These incidents can be prevented with the installation of Tamper Resistant Receptacles (TRR).

Located in practically every room in every home, electrical outlets and receptacles represent a constant and real danger wherever young children are found. TRR technology provides a simple, affordable, permanent solution to help prevent child shock and burn injuries caused by tampering with wall outlets.

### What are tamper resistant receptacles, or TRRs?

TRRs have a very similar appearance to standard wall outlets, but they are actually designed with spring-loaded receptacle cover plates that close off the receptacle openings or slots.

### Why do I need TRRs?

Every year in the United States, more than 2,400 children under the age of 10 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for electrical shock or burns caused by tampering with a wall outlet around the home—that is seven children a day.

Nearly one-third of these injuries occur when a small child at-

tempts to insert household objects such as hairpins, keys or paperclips into the receptacle.

### How do TRRs work?

When equal pressure is simultaneously applied to both sides, the receptacle cover plates open, allowing a standard plug to make contact with the receptacle contact points. Without this synchronized pressure, the cover plates remain closed, preventing the insertion of foreign objects.

### Are TRRs effective?

TRRs have proven to be so effective that the 2011 National Electrical Code (NEC) requires installation of TRRs in all new home construction.

Although not widely used in homes until recently, tamper resistant receptacles have been required in hospital pediatric care facilities for more than 20 years.

### How much do TRRs cost?

The cost of installing a TRR in a newly constructed home is only about \$0.50 more than a traditional receptacle.

Existing homes can be easily retrofitted with tamper resistant receptacles for as little as \$2 per outlet.

### Can I install them myself?

TRRs use the same installation guidelines that apply to standard receptacles and should only be installed by a licensed, qualified electrician.



Equal pressure must be applied for the receptacle cover plates to open. Without this synchronized pressure, the cover plates remain closed.

## Whitt Attends Co-op Youth Leadership Camp

Twin Valley Electric sent **LANE WHITT** to Steamboat Springs, CO, along with 32 other high school students from Kansas. The students joined youth from



Lane Whitt enjoys the view on top of Lookout Mountain outside of Denver.

Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, July 14-20, 2012.

During their week-long stay in Colorado, the students created their own cooperative, complete with a board of trustees and general manager selected by the students.

Among other activities were legislative presentations, a high voltage display and a competition to build a transmission line from craft supplies. Students also toured Craig Power Plant and Trapper Mine.

"The thing that I enjoyed most was the motivational speaker," Whitt said. "He taught us the specific characteristics of a leader."

To earn this trip, Whitt completed a written test and personal interview.

Whitt was also elected by his fellow campers to attend next year's camp as an ambassador. In this position, he will help coordinate camp activities and encourage next year's campers.

"Twin Valley Electric is proud to send our youth to learn first-hand how cooperatives function," said Ron Holsteen, General Manager of Twin Valley Electric. "Our hope is that local students will gain some awareness of how our electric cooperative works and how important it is for the youth to be involved in our community."

For more information, contact Jennifer at 866-784-5500.

# The Attic is Still Hot

BY DOUG RYE



Doug Rye

“If we have record weather temperatures, I can assure you that we also have record temperatures in the attics.”

Publication schedules require that I submit this article almost 30 days before it reaches your mailbox. I decide what I am going to write about and how I can best help you by the number of calls that I get that relate to a particular subject and by what I think the situation will be like in 30 days.

I wrote the “Cooling Off the Attic” column on the first in June, because I knew that attics would start getting really hot in July. I had no idea that we would have record high temperatures. If we have record weather temperatures, I can assure you that we also have record temperatures in the attics.

I have received a greater response from last month’s column than from any other column that I have ever written. Even as I am writing this column, I am still getting calls.

Let me make this clear to you. I am not complaining, but am honored to have had the opportunity to help so many of you solve your energy-related problems.

I am tempted to just suggest that you just go back and read the column again, but I want to teach you even more improvements that relate to an attic.

Remember that the attic may be hot now, but it may be super cold in four or five months. Either way it can affect your comfort and utility bills.

When a house has an attic access hole, an attic pull-down stairway or a whole house attic fan located in the conditioned area of the house, it is almost always a major energy waster.

Since heat always moves toward cold, the heat in the house tries to go to the attic in the winter and the heat in the attic tries

to go into the house in the summer through any spot that is not insulated or air tight.

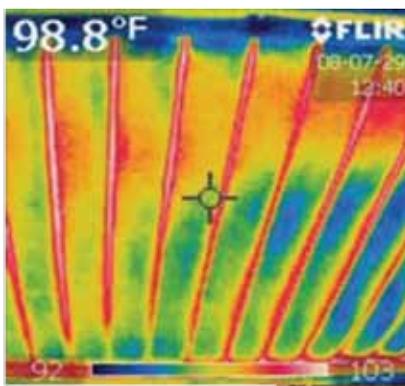
An infrared photo of a pull-down attic staircase on a hot summer day reveals a lot (shown below at right). It shows that the staircase ranges from 90 to 103 degrees Fahrenheit. It’s trying to heat your house on a summer day, and it’s trying to cool your house on a winter day. Solution: Install an insulated cover over opening. Go to [www.AtticTent.com](http://www.AtticTent.com) for a good solution.

Whole house fan louvers (shown below at left) are just as bad as the pull-down staircase, and the house thermostat is usually located right under the louvers. The poor thermostat doesn’t know what to do. The best solution is to simply disconnect the fan, remove the entire assembly and replace with a finished ceiling. Then cover the entire area with insulation. However, if you wish to retain the unit for future use, call me at the office and I will give you the information for a really good solution.

For an attic access hole, weatherstrip the opening and glue rigid foam insulation to the back of the access panel.

You see, it really isn’t that difficult to solve another energy problem at your house if you just know what to do.

**DOUG RYE** is a licensed architect and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show. You can contact Doug at 501-653-7931. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.



The images above show air infiltration at whole house fan louvers (left) and at a pull down attic stair case (right).