



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

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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Contact Us

501 S. Huston Ave., P.O. Box 368
Altamont, KS 67330
620-784-5500
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

Holiday Office Closing

Our office will be closed on November 22-23 for Thanksgiving. We hope you have a safe and happy holiday.

**Happy
Thanksgiving!**

FROM THE MANAGER

Finding the Value of Electricity

Nowadays, cell phones and personal digital devices are a part of our culture. Everyone, it seems, is connected on the go—whether they're just making phone calls, text messaging, or checking e-mail. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for, generally without grumbling.

So, why is it that when it comes to electricity—a necessity in our modern world—many of us complain when the electric bill comes every month? We expect electricity to be there at the flip of the switch, and when it's not, we get angry or frustrated.

Hey, I'm no different—I expect the lights to come on every time, too. As the CEO of Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, I have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable and affordable. I also believe that when compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

For example, over the past 10 years, gasoline has shot up 12.66 percent on average annually, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A loaf of white bread rose 3.73 percent annually, and a dozen eggs jumped 7.39 percent per year.

In comparison, electricity has increased just 2.8 percent a year for the past decade. When you consider how reliable electricity is, the

value goes up even more. Electricity is a 24-hour-a-day commodity. We're working hard to reduce even those brief interruptions, increase our service reliability, and control costs through innovative technology.

Those cell phones I mentioned earlier? Nearly a third of all U.S. households have four electronic devices, such as cell phones, plugged in and charging, according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. In the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17 to 31 percent. More homes than ever use major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders (DVRs), computers, and multiple televisions have become ubiquitous.

Clearly, our appetite for electricity shows no signs of slowing down. So the next time you flip a switch, use your toaster, or run your washing machine, remember the value electricity holds. Know that Twin Valley is looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation and putting you, our members, first.



Ron Holsteen

NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

Change is Good



William Worthy

Well, it is getting close to that time of year again. Leaves are turning, temperatures are falling and the local Mega Mart is looking like the North

Pole. It seems like just yesterday that we were sweating in 100-plus degree temperatures and wanting to stay indoors in the air conditioning. However, time goes on and the weather changes. Many things are changing at your electric cooperative, as well.

We have completed the 153 miles of system reconstruction funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and have since been awarded 44 more miles of mitigation.

The 44 miles consist of multiple

small jobs scattered about the system and one large 15-mile rebuild/new construction that will provide a redundant feed to the Service Valley Charter School on Wallace Road in Labette County. The other jobs will be replacing conductors and moving lines so they are more accessible to your linemen. We plan to conduct about one-third of this work with in-house crews, and a contractor will complete the rest. Engineering and staking is already in process, and we hope to start construction very soon.

Your Twin Valley crews are nearing completion on 4.5 miles of line upgrade that will serve a new railroad locomotive repair facility north of Cherryvale. The job consists of converting a single-phase line to three-phase to the facility. Not only will this line serve the locomotive repair shop, it will bring three-phase close to the Tri-City Airport

for future development and growth.

On September 7, a fast moving storm rolled through the area just as your linemen were heading home for the weekend. The calls started coming in at 3:30 p.m. and the linemen and office staff of your electric cooperative knew that Friday night plans with the family would have to wait because duty

was calling.

After the storm passed, we found multiple poles down; wire was on the ground and fuses all over the system were blown. The office staff handled the calls, the linemen made the necessary repairs and most everyone had their service restored by midnight. It takes dedication and commitment for our men and women to put their personal lives on hold to restore your service after an event like that and I am proud we have such dedicated people.

Twin Valley's **ADAM MYERS** recently completed the Journeyman Lineman Apprenticeship Certification Program (JLAC) and is now a Journeyman



Adam Myers

Lineman. The JLAC is a four-year program to train personnel in line work. Adam has been with Twin Valley since June 2007 when he was a student/intern. He graduated from Oklahoma State University in Okmulgee, OK, with an associate's degree in Applied Science and began full-time September 1, 2009. Adam and his wife, Kayan, live in Altamont.

Finally, a big congratulations goes out to Twin Valley Apprentice Lineman **KENDALL MANNERS** and his wife, Tyler. At 3:36 a.m. on October 11, 2012, **HARLEY ADALINE MANNERS** came into the world. All are healthy and well. Harley was welcomed home by big sister Kaia and Sammy the beagle.

Happy Thanksgiving to all, and be safe if traveling during the upcoming holiday. As always, I welcome any comments or suggestions. I can be reached at wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop.



The repairs are nearly complete north of Cherryvale. Starting at 22,000 and Chase, going west two miles to Anderson, two miles north on Anderson to 24,000, back to the west for a half a mile.

Cold Weather Rule Begins Nov. 1

(1) The provisions of the Cold Weather Rule establish the disconnection procedures for delinquent accounts of any Residential Member of the Cooperative throughout the cold weather period, which extends from November 1 through March 31. The cold weather rule will be applied when the local National Weather Service office forecasts the temperature to drop below 35 degrees (the activating temperature) within the following 24 hour period.

(2) To avoid disconnection during the cold weather period and qualify for the benefits of the Cold Weather Rule the Member must meet the requirements of the Good Faith Test. To meet the requirements of the Good Faith Test, the Member will:

(a) Inform the Cooperative of the Member's inability to pay the bill in full;

(b) Give sufficient information to allow the Cooperative to make a payment agreement;

(c) Enter a level payment plan agreement for past, current and future charges for electric service with arrears paid in equal installments over the next three months. The Member and the Cooperative may negotiate other payment arrangements mutually agreeable, individualized to the Member's situation providing the most appropriate terms, after the Member has been informed that he or she has at least three months in which to pay;

(d) Apply for federal, state, local or other funds for which the Member is eligible;

(e) Not obtain electric service by tampering as defined in Section 6.J of our Rules and Regulations; and

(f) Not default on a payment plan.

(3) When a local National Weather Service forecasts the temperature to be above the activating temperature for the next 24 hours, the Cooperative will fulfill the procedures outlined in Section 5 of our Rules and Regulations.

Be Alert! Don't be a Victim of Phone Scams

Last summer, thousands of consumers from coast-to-coast fell prey to a telephone scam promising bogus help with energy bills.

In this scam, criminals called and told residents that President Obama had authorized a special federal program to pay electric bills. They then asked each victim to provide personal information, such as a bank routing number or a Social Security number, to receive the payment. This is just one example of many different ways criminals steal money or identities from unsuspecting consumers.

Falling for a scam could prove very expensive, resulting in stolen identity, bank and credit card fraud, and, in the case of those believing their electric bill has been paid, power being cut off for non-payment.

Twin Valley Electric Cooperative offers the following tips to avoid being scammed:

▶ Twin Valley will NEVER call and ask

for sensitive personal information over the phone.

▶ Members should only use methods authorized by Twin Valley to pay their electric bills.

▶ Twin Valley employees visit a home only in response to a service request. If a service call has not been scheduled or requested, do not allow the person to enter your house.

▶ When an employee does come in response to a service call, check identification and make sure the service truck is clearly marked with Twin Valley.

Sometimes the success of the crime can be attributed to the victims themselves, who, not realizing they had been scammed, told neighbors and friends about the wonderful bill payment program.

The bottom line: If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. has filed with the Federal Government a Compliance Assurance in which it assures the Rural Utilities Service it will comply fully with all the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Agriculture issued thereunder, to the end that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the conduct of its program and the operation of its facilities.

Under this assurance, this organization is committed not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color or national origin in its policies and practices relating to applications for service or any other policies and practices relating to treatment of beneficiaries and participants. This includes rates, conditions and extension of service, use of any of its facilities, attendance at and participation in any meetings of beneficiaries and participants or the exercise of any rights of such beneficiaries and participants in the conduct of the operations of this organization.

Any person who believes himself, or any specific class of individuals, to be subjected by this organization to discrimination prohibited by Title VI of the Act and the Rules and Regulations issued thereunder may, by himself or a representative, file with the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250 or the Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C., 20250 or this organization, or all, a written complaint. Such complaint must be filed no later than 180 days after the alleged discrimination, or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Rural Utilities Service extends the time for filing.

Identity of complainants will be kept confidential to the extent necessary to carry out the purpose of the Rules and Regulations.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

From Hot Attics to Frost BY DOUG RYE



Doug Rye

**The
sooner
you
fix the
problems,
the
better.**

Yippee. It is fall, school is in full swing, football is being played, the leaves are beautiful colors and attics are no longer super-hot. And, yes, the utility bills will be lower because little, if any, heating or cooling was needed in October.

If you want to know about what it costs to cool your house on one of those hot summer months like August, simply subtract a low fall bill like October's from the August bill. For example: August \$275 minus October \$165 equals \$110 for August cooling. This is just an estimate, but works fairly well for most houses because the lowest usage in the fall or the lowest usage in the spring is the amount that we consider the base usage of the house. Additional usage would usually be related to heating or cooling.

It is amazing to me that we are still receiving calls from folks who read the previous three hot attic columns. I am convinced that we have helped many of you find the solution to the problems that a hot attic can cause. May I remind you that helping you, the readers of this column, is what this column is all about.

A gentleman recently called me and was very concerned about his high summer electric bills. I asked him all of my usual questions about his house and, based on his answers, agreed that he needed help. Because no two existing houses are exactly the same when considering energy efficiency, I suggested that he have a qualified energy auditor perform a detailed energy assessment of his house. Much to my surprise, he told me that he had an audit performed in 1996. Yes, that's 16 years ago. I asked him if he still had a copy of the audit. He told me that he had it right at his fingertips. I asked him lots of questions about the audit.

I learned that the audit was performed by a company that I considered to be totally qualified to test a house. I learned that the house, when tested, had an air leakage rating of .77 natural air changes per hour. Oh my lands, I thought. This house is what we call a 77 percent leaker. For those of you who read this column regularly, you know a 77 percent leakage is not good.

A house built to our suggested standards has a leakage rate of about 20 percent, which has proven through the years to be about per-

fect. Based on the audit report, the air infiltration was coming from many sources, such as recessed lights, wood trim, lack of door weather-stripping, attic access panels and serious ductwork problems, such as panned floor joists for the return air system. The report also mentioned a serious lack of attic insulation. Folks, while this may sound terrible, this is fairly typical for many older houses.

At one point during our conversation, he said to me, "The problems are probably about the same as they were then because we have not made any of the suggested improvements."

I actually felt sad for this family at that moment, because I was certain that they had been paying higher than necessary utility bills for at least 16 years.

The reason that I tell you this story is because the audit report also gave the family a price quote to fix all of the problems. I am fairly certain that the family had sufficient funds to make those improvements, but, for whatever reason, chose not to do so. The quoted price for the improvements in 1996 was far less than the cost to make the improvements in 2012.

If the improvements had been made in 1996, the family would have already saved the amount spent on them by having lower utility bills for 16 years. Now, I want to commend this family. Although they wished that they made the improvements many years ago, they bit the bullet and hired a company to make the improvements in 2012.

The extra money they spent on higher utility bills in 16 years would have more than paid for those improvements and their house would have been far more comfortable. So, I always say, the sooner you fix the problems, the better.

If your utility bills are higher than they should be, I suggest that you also obtain a comprehensive energy audit from a credentialed expert. If you are a member of an electric co-op, you can call the member services department for assistance.

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.