



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Co-op Connections Card Savings Update

In May, Twin Valley members filled 16 prescriptions using the Co-op Connections Card and saved **\$87.29!** That makes an annual savings of **\$1,208.78.**

FROM THE MANAGER

Celebrating Co-op Independence

July is the time we celebrate our nation's independence. In the midst of apple pies and hot dogs, fireworks shows and parades, I can't help but think about the independent streak that inspired groups of farmers around America's countryside to band together and improve their quality of life.

Aside from President Franklin Roosevelt's promise of federal aid in the form of low-interest loans and engineering expertise, rural Americans didn't have much help in bringing electricity to their homes. They pulled themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and did it themselves.

This independence not only tends to inspire cooperatives; it's a guiding principle. The Fourth Co-operative Principle, "Autonomy and Independence," means that no matter what contracts Twin Valley Electric Cooperative might enter into, we will always remain an independent entity.

"We tip our hats to Twin Valley's founders, who beat incredible odds to make life better for themselves and their neighbors."



Ron Holsteen

Each year, Twin Valley's annual meeting becomes an independence celebration. You vote for candidates on the board of directors, and we discuss co-op business. We share a meal and have some fun.

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across the country, from coast to coast. Co-op lines are strung in 47 states, serving 42 million people—a different world from 1935, when much of America remained dark. This Fourth of July, as we recognize the hard-fought war that created the United States, I'll also tip my hat to Twin Valley founders, who beat incredible odds to make life better for themselves and their neighbors.

Have a Safe Holiday!

In observance of Independence Day
Twin Valley's office will be closed on Thursday, July 4.



NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

Wichita Man Dies After Apparently Electrocuting Himself while Climbing Utility Pole with Bolt Cutters

BY TIM POTTER, REPRINTED FROM THE WICHITA EAGLE



William Worthy

As my regular readers know, at times I try to stay with the theme Kansas Country Living has set for the month. However, this month I would like to stay with

last month's topic that looked into copper theft.

The following article is reprinted with permission from the author and the Wichita Eagle originally published Friday, June 7, 2013, at 4:30 p.m. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, you can contact me at wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop.

A man in his mid-20s has died in south Wichita after apparently electrocuting himself while climbing a utility pole with a bolt cutter and coming into contact with a live wire, a police official said Friday.

Westar Energy spokesman Nick Bundy, who spoke to reporters at the scene after the man's body was found, said, "We've been worried that something like this was going to

happen."

Copper theft, even from high-voltage utility equipment, has spiked since last year, Bundy said. The top line on the utility pole where the man was found Friday carries 7,200 volts, Bundy said.

"Our biggest point is these thieves are putting their lives at risk for a couple dollars of copper," he said.

The copper comes from electrical wire that is stripped and sold for scrap.

Police Lt. Dennis Wilson gave this account: About 2:10 p.m. Friday, a person on a bike path near the 2200 block of South Minnesota, south of Mt. Vernon and I-135, saw a man lying near a utility pole. The man had apparently leaned his bike against the pole, using it to stand on, and then climbed up 10 to 12 feet, high enough to come into contact with a live wire that electrocuted him. Bolt cutters were found nearby.

The utility pole is in an area of boarded-up apartment buildings.

The man appeared to have been lying on the ground since overnight and to have been killed instantly, Wilson said.

Crews found two wires hanging

from the pole.

Wilson noted the increase in copper theft, adding, "This may be something he was trying to do. Unfortunately, he was electrocuted."

Police have identified the man but were not releasing his name.

Bundy, the Westar spokesman, said after Friday's grim discovery: "The thieves are getting braver."

He cited an incident about a month ago in which someone stole copper from a Westar substation near Pawnee and Rock. The theft involved such high-voltage equipment that the company expected to find a body at the site but didn't. The pilfering caused an outage at McConnell Air Force Base and for about 2,000 residential customers around 4:30 a.m., Bundy said.

The death discovered Friday should serve as a warning to those who might be tempted to cut wire to be sold for scrap, he said.

It also poses a hazard for utility crews and the public, especially when someone removes a ground wire, he said.

Reprinted with permission from Tim Potter and *The Wichita Eagle*. Originally published Friday, June 7, 2013, at 4:30 p.m.



Crystal Clarenson Wins Guess the Seal Contest

Can you guess how many seals are in the meter at the left? If you guessed 110 you are correct!

CRYSTAL CLARENSON was the closest with her guess of 101 seals in the meter. She won a \$25 electric credit.

If you would like a chance to win, simply stop by the Twin Valley office **between now and July 15** to submit your guess or send your guess in with your payment.

- ▶ You must be a Twin Valley member to win.
- ▶ One guess per person per month.
- ▶ In the event of a tie, the final winner will be chosen by drawing. So, all members with the correct guess will have their names thrown in for the luck of the draw.

Tips to Keep Your Summer Safe

When the weather gets hot, we head outdoors for sun and fun. Keep in mind some tips to make sure everyone has a safe summer.

Water and electricity don't mix

Summer is the season for swimming and boating, and awareness of electrical hazards around water can prevent deaths and injuries.

► Use covers on outdoor power outlets, especially near swimming pools.

Keep cords and electrical devices away from the water, and never handle electrical items before you've dried off.

► Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries.

These devices interrupt the flow of power when they sense a surge. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.

Lightning and storms

Lightning strikes are fatal in 10 percent of victims, and 70 percent suffer serious long-term effects, according to the National Weather Service. Because lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles, blue skies are not a sign of safety. If you hear thunder, take cover.

► If weather conditions indicate a storm, stay inside—away from doors and windows—or seek shelter in a low-lying area away from trees and metal, including sheds, clotheslines, poles, and fences. If you're near water, stay as far away as possible.

► If you're in a group, spread out—don't stand close together.

► Indoors, unplug electronics before the storm arrives, and don't use corded phones.



Keep your family safe this summer. Remember to use covers on outdoor power outlets, especially near swimming pools.

- **Avoid plumbing**—sinks, bathtubs, faucets.
- **Don't forget about your pets.** Doghouses are not safe from lightning, and chained animals are easy targets.
- **If your home is flooded during a storm, don't turn on appliances or electronics until given the okay by an electrician.** If there's standing water, don't go inside. The water could be energized.

Working with large appliances

If your air conditioner goes out, keep in mind, large appliances, such as air conditioners, are responsible for almost 20 percent of consumer-product electrocutions each year.

- **Understand your electrical system**—know which fuse or circuit breaker controls each switch, light, and outlet.
- **Make sure circuits are turned off before starting work** and take measures to ensure they're not turned back on while working.
- **Use a circuit tester**—always test before you touch.

Lights Out!

Automatic controls can keep lighting costs in check

Whether you can't train your kids to turn out lights when they leave a room or need a better outdoor lighting scheme, automatic controls might be a cost-effective solution.

No matter what type you use, the most important thing to remember for any lighting control is to use a type of light bulb that doesn't need to "warm up," such as incandescents, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

Indoors

Occupancy sensors are helpful indoors, as long as they're positioned to detect people in any corner of the room. They're also good as task lighting—above places like a desk or kitchen sink—so you get the extra light you need while working, but you don't forget and leave it on all night.

They are two types of occupancy sensors: ultrasonic and infrared. Ultrasonic sensors detect sound; infrared sensors detect heat and motion.

Timers make an empty home look occupied. If kids are still running in and out, however, timers aren't as effective as occupancy sensors. Plug timers into a wall outlet or install them in the wall, like a light switch or thermostat. New varieties are digital.

Photosensors are generally best outdoors, but new applications have found they're also useful for LED nightlights. When an overhead light is on, the nightlight shuts off automatically.

Outdoors

If you already have or are thinking about installing an outdoor security light, consider combining it with a photosensor to keep it from burning all day. A motion sensor goes one step further, if you don't want continuous light.

Twin Valley does have available an outdoor/security lighting program! Contact your local Twin Valley office and inquire about a lease or purchase of one of our lights.

Timers are commonly used for aesthetic or holiday lighting, sometimes in conjunction with a photosensor—so they turn on at dusk and turn off at a designated time.

Visit EnergySavers.gov to learn more about energy efficiency in your home.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

Building or Remodeling? We Can Help! BY DOUG RYE



Doug Rye

“If you are considering building a new home or remodeling please contact me first. The earlier you do this, the more we can help you.”

As I'm writing this column, the weathermen just reported that we set not one, but two record low temperatures in May. Many of you were still running the heat pumps and furnaces well into the month of May. It appears we may have one of those years where we transition from the heating season to cooling season overnight.

So, by the time you receive this issue, the summer season will officially be here. And with its arrival, heat does an about-face and will move into our homes that we are trying to cool. This movement of energy during summer months is called heat gain. Plus, as the outside temperature rises, so does the amount of energy required to cool your house, which, as you know, equates to a higher utility bill.

Recently, I received some calls from folks who are planning to build new houses or remodel their existing homes while interest rates are still near record lows. If you are considering building a new home or remodeling, please contact me first. Do so before you start construction. The reason I'm putting an emphasis on before is because most energy efficiency components and measures must be installed during the early construction stages. Most generally, I can assist with every energy efficiency component if you contact me before you begin construction. It's disappointing when I get a call from my readers only to learn your construction project is under way and energy inefficient methods have been implemented. Oftentimes it's too late to make any changes unless you desire to invest in an expensive job change order.

Let me give you a recent example: I received a call from a man who is building a new house. He told me that he was employed as a welder and wanted his house built from steel and insulated with open-cell spray foam. His home was 1,600 square feet and on a slab. Hearing these preliminary details was music to my ears. Then I asked him, "What can I do for you?"

He answered that a friend told him that he might have a moisture problem. I told him that we had been involved with several steel-framed house projects that included foam insulation. None had any moisture problems.

That's when he told me that the house was almost complete and that he had already installed nine-inches of foam in the exterior walls, three-inch batts at the roofline and 11-inches of foam in the wood-framed ceiling joists. I also learned that the ductwork for the heating and cooling system was installed and a four-ton heating and cooling unit was on order. The music in my ears faded to the pit in my stomach.

I am very proud of this homeowner. He had great intentions of building a super-efficient building envelope for his new home. However, there was far more insulation installed than required for our climate zone. Plus, the heating and cooling system was incorrectly sized (oversized) for the extremely efficient dwelling. Both conditions equated to unnecessary additional construction costs and, most likely, will attribute to comfort and moisture issues.

As the homeowner and I were discussing the situation, I calculated the heating and cooling load to be about 1.5 tons. While I commended the homeowner for being so energy conscious, the current situation left him without very many solutions. The obvious solution was to install a properly sized heating and cooling system or deal with uncomfortable consequences of an oversized unit. As our call ended, the homeowner understood the nature of an oversized unit and chose to install the proper equipment.

This unfortunate situation could have been avoided if the homeowner would have called the energy advisor at his local electric cooperative or me, before construction began.

Folks, if you are planning to build a new house, I have two recommendations for you. Call me at my office at 501-653-7931 for help, or download a copy of the "Building Guidelines for Energy Efficiency" booklet at www.smartenergytips.org. The earlier you do this, the more we can help you.

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.