



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.

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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
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

Guess the Seal

In December, Elaine Phillips guessed 202 seals (there were 200 seals in the meter). She won a \$25 electric credit. To submit your guess, stop by the Twin Valley office **before Jan. 15** to submit your guess or send it in with your payment.

FROM THE MANAGER

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. In some ways, 2013 was a very challenging year for your cooperative, but there have been a lot of positive events.

Energy sales to our members through the end of November were down approximately 9 percent from our system's peak sales set in 2011 due primarily to the mild weather last winter and much milder weather last summer. The lower kWh energy sales have resulted in our operating revenues being about 20 percent less than budgeted.

But on the positive side, the milder summer weather also resulted in a lower peak demand during July and August which has resulted in a 3 percent drop in the kW demand charges that Twin Valley must pay for its wholesale power costs through May of 2014. Also KEPCo, our wholesale power supplier, has restructured some of its long term debt which should reduce our wholesale cost of power for the next two or three years.

Twin Valley also took advantage of the lower interest rates and refinanced over \$2.4 million of our RUS long term debt which will save your cooperative about \$560,000 in interest costs over the term of those notes.

Each year Twin Valley's property taxes are determined by a Unit Value that the Director of the Division of Property Valuation in the Department of Revenue sets for the cooperative each year. This year, we successfully appealed the Directors Valuation and then successfully appealed that lower Unit Value to the Court of Tax Appeals (COTA) resulting in a savings of about \$16,000, after expenses, in our property taxes for 2013.

Our contractor, KIOWA Line Builders, is building the last section of line in the FEMA Mitigation Project Grant that we were awarded in 2012. Once this new section of three phase line is completed, we will have a good three phase connection tying all of our substations and metering points together so that we can restore power to the metering points much faster.

We have already used this connection to restore power to those members served by our Chetopa

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Ron Holsteen

“With this year's capital credit allocations, Twin Valley has now returned \$1,418,000 of equity to its members.”

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Go Paperless Today



Whether you're busy taking care of your family, or just always on the go, we

know how hard it is to get everything done in 24 hours. That's why Twin Valley Electric is proud to offer online bill pay.

You have the ability to pay your bills online, view your account history and your statements with our Online Bill Pay system. Just visit our website at www.twinvalleyelectric.coop and click the Online Bill Pay icon. You'll be directed to our secure site. Once there you will need to create a user ID, the first time you log on. You can then view and pay your bill online. It's really that easy.

Our Online Bill Pay system is secure and designed to protect your account and payment information. Payment methods include personal check, or use your Visa or MasterCard card.

From the Manager Continued from page 16-A

substation a couple of times this fall when the transmission line operated by Empire Electric has gone out of service. The FEMA grant pays 75 percent of the costs of these new lines.

The Board of Directors authorized the retirement of the remaining Capital Credits (\$62,153.38) allocated in 1991. Anyone who was a member

of the Cooperative in 1991 should have already received a check from Twin Valley in December returning those capital credits allocated to them for that year. Twin Valley has now returned \$1,418,000 of equity to its members.

We wish each of you a very successful and happy 2014.

Keep Food Safe During a Power Outage

We've all been there: a summer storm rolls through, toppling trees and damaging power lines. The lights go out. And although it may only be a matter of minutes or hours before your electric co-op gets things up and running again, thawing food in the refrigerator and freezer can make that relatively short time seem like an eternity.

It's important to keep cold food safe during a power outage, and a little advanced preparation and know-how can keep your family safe from food-borne bacteria.

First and foremost, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature: if unopened, a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours; a full freezer will do so for about 48 hours (24 hours if it's half-full).

A sure-fire way to know if food is safe is to monitor its temperature. Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs should be refrigerated at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and frozen food at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. If the power goes out, a digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometer and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food remains at safe temperatures.

If the power stays out for a prolonged period, there are a few ways to aid your refrigerator and freezer in the fight to keep things cold. The simplest tip is to keep your freezer full. If it's not full, group items close together to preserve the cold.

Dry ice can help keep freezers chilly: find it by scanning for “ice” or

“carbon dioxide” in the phone book. It will take about 25 pounds to keep a full, 10-cubic foot freezer safe for three to four days. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for two days. Wear heavy-duty gloves or use tongs when handling dry ice—the temperature of dry ice is -216 degrees Fahrenheit—and separate it from food with cardboard to prevent freezer burn.

During cold months, it may be tempting to store food outside. Although this may work for cold drinks, food can spoil in direct sunlight. Curious animals may also take advantage of an outside stash.

Rather than putting the food outside, consider taking advantage of the cold temperatures by making ice. Fill buckets, empty milk cartons, or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Then transfer the homemade ice to your refrigerator, freezer, or coolers.

Power back on? Make sure your food is still safe by either checking its temperature or looking for ice crystals. If frozen food is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below or ice crystals are visible, it's safe to refreeze. Discard any perishable refrigerated food (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees for two hours.

Scott Gates writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Attention High School Juniors

Don't Miss this FREE Trip of a Lifetime!



Each year, students from Kansas join more than 1,600 youth in Washington, D.C., to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This year's Youth Tour is scheduled for June 12-19, 2014.



Kansas delegates attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp along with students from three other states to develop leadership skills and learn about co-ops. The 2014 CYLC will be July 12-18.

Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., will send one high school junior to the "Government in Action" Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and one to the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, CO.

To Qualify

The applicant must be a high school junior living within the cooperative's territorial boundaries and the child of a Twin Valley Electric member.

To Apply

Applicants will be expected to study and take a quiz over information sent by Twin Valley regarding electric cooperatives. There will also be a short interview on

_____ at 2 p.m. to pick the winner. All participating students will receive a prize.

To apply please complete, sign and return the application below to Twin Valley, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330.

Youth Tour Selection Process

Applicants must complete an application and return it to the cooperative office. Finalists will be quizzed and interviewed by a panel of judges at the cooperative offices.

For More Information

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

Application for Youth Tour Contest

Name of Applicant _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birth Date _____ Twin Valley Account # _____

Name of Parents or Guardians _____

Parents' Phone Number _____

School _____

I agree that all information supplied in this application is accurate and true.

Signature of Applicant _____

I hereby grant permission for the above named applicant to enter the 2014 Youth Tour competition sponsored by Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _____

NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

Aging wiring in your home can lead to problems



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. Sometimes 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 like a needle in a haystack and we have to spend time 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 run into, and 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 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. And 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.

Twin Valley's **KENDALL MANNERS** recently completed the Journeyman Lineman Apprenticeship Certification Program (JLAC) and is now a Journeyman Lineman. The JLAC is a four-year program to train personnel in line work. Kendall has been with Twin Valley since August 2009 after graduating from Pittsburg State with an Associate's Degree in Electrical Engineering. Kendall and his wife Tyler, along with their children Harley and Kaia, live outside of Parsons.

As always, I welcome questions or comments and can be reached at wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop. See you next month.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Ron Holsteen, General Manager, of Twin Valley.

Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may file a written complaint with this organization; the Director, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discriminatory action, or by such later date to which the Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Civil Rights or the Administrator of RUS extends the time for filing. Identity of complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.