



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1511 14,000 Road, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330  
866-784-5500  
[www.twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://www.twinvalleyelectric.coop)

**TWIN VALLEY  
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

# NEWS

## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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

**Contact Us**  
1511 14,000 Road  
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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Celebrating Membership

Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It's also when all cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When I say Twin Valley Electric celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our consumer-members.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. Concern for Community is one of Seven Cooperative Principles that all co-ops share.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions — because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

Twin Valley works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that's comprised of neighbors who live right here in our community. Because we're local, we understand our community's unique needs and strive to help meet them.

We're proud to support local youth through our Youth Tour and scholarship programs. With your help, we offer Operation Roundup to provide food

to children in need within our own community. We provide support to our local 4-H, various charitable organizations, and local activities and events.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together toward a common goal — mutually benefitting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which they live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven't already, I encourage you take a moment and download our SmartHub app. Through the app, you can conveniently monitor and manage your energy use. Of course, we are here to help, so give us a call if you have questions about your energy bills.

Twin Valley is continuously examining ways to operate more efficiently while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we're your local co-op. We were built by the members we serve.



**Angie Erickson**

# The Electric Co-op History of Innovation

BY PAUL WESSLUND

## From high-tech to high-touch

Did you know one of the most cutting-edge places for technology is right up the road at your local electric cooperative?

That's right! Innovation isn't happening just in computer labs or on satellites rocketing into space. Electric co-ops lead even the highly-technical electric utility industry in such fast-changing areas as renewable energy and installation of smart meters that allow the more efficient use of electricity.

While it may seem surprising to think of your electric co-op as a high-tech leader, it's part of a way of doing business that has been finding new approaches to solving modern problems for nearly 100 years.

### Making Light Out of Darkness

In fact, electric co-ops were originally created to solve one of the most basic and complex of needs and desires — making light out of darkness.

That legacy still works today, and it's why time is set aside each October to recognize National Co-op Month. It's a reminder that business succeeds not just through competition, but also through cooperation.

As a result of the member-owned cooperative form of business, co-ops stand out in many areas of the electric utility industry. They lead the way in community solar — an initiative in which the co-op utility builds a solar array that is supported by interested co-op members buying shares of the project. Electric vehicles are getting a boost from co-ops as well, with many placing charging stations in public parks and other rural locations.

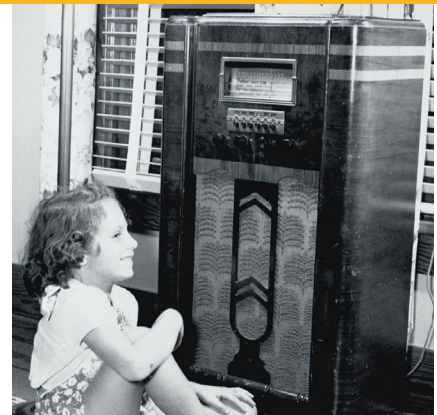
And just as co-ops first brought electricity to unserved rural areas nearly a century ago, today many of them are working to bring high-speed internet service to their local communities.

In the early part of the last century, America's cities were being transformed by this new thing called electricity. But outside the municipal boundaries, people could only look with envy at the glow from over the horizon. Setting poles and stringing power lines miles outside of town for one or two customers was deemed too expensive.

Luckily, go-getters in America's rural communities believed they could solve the problems that kept the power companies from connecting them to modern society.

They called their friends and neighbors together and started forming their own utilities. They were community-based organizations, democratically-run, not-for-profit businesses called cooperatives. Today, there are more than 900 electric co-ops in the U.S.

It wasn't easy, especially at first. They got a huge boost when, after getting the attention of some key politicians, the federal government created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA made loans available, helping finance expensive utility construction. It provided technical consulting, developing engineering techniques to carry electricity longer distances. The agency drew up model co-op bylaws and even went on the road with tent shows to demonstrate how to use the latest conveniences like electric ovens and washing machines.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Electric co-ops were originally created to solve one of the most basic and complex of needs and desires — making light out of darkness.

### A True Grassroots Movement

But the biggest innovation is simply the co-op itself, and the notion of a utility with only one mission — to make life better for its members, who are also its customers.

Electric co-ops didn't spring from a national directive or organization. They are truly homegrown products of what local people wanted for their community. Electric co-ops first started forming as early as 1914, and the formation of the REA in 1935 helped smooth the way forward. But it was local community initiative over the next three decades that finally brought electric service to nearly everyone.

The story of electric co-ops is of a true grassroots movement of unique, homegrown organizations. The one characteristic that applies to all of them is that they care for and listen to the local members they serve.

For electric co-ops, one size does not fit all — it's the local community that's in charge. In recognizing that every one of us is different, co-ops make both an electric connection, and a human connection. And that's a truly powerful innovation.

**PAUL WESSLUND** writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

Electric co-ops stand out in many areas of the electric utility industry. They lead the way in community solar — an initiative in which the co-op builds a solar array that is supported by interested members buying shares of the project.



DAVID MAXWELL

# Encountering a Downed Power Line

Storms, fires, car accidents or animal interference are all examples of events that can damage overhead power lines, pad-mounted transformers (green boxes) or other electrical equipment. While these are not examples of everyday occurrences, it's important to know what to do if you encounter downed power lines.

(Spoiler alert. Do not do any of the following in these scenarios.) If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

**ANY OF THESE ACTIONS CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY OR ELECTROCUTION (DEATH).** Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after getting into an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

**The safest place to be after getting into an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab.**

- ▶ Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
- ▶ Call 911 and report there are downed or damaged power lines.
- ▶ Try to remain calm.
- ▶ Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.
- ▶ Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time).

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes to the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

## Don't Become ELECTRICITY'S Path to Ground

When electric utility equipment becomes damaged, the ground and objects can become energized.

If you are in a situation where there could be downed power lines or a damaged pole, guy wire or padmount transformer (green box), know what to do to save your life and the lives of others.



### Car Accident —

- 1 Stay inside your vehicle or cab since the ground or objects could be energized.
- 2 Call 911 and report there are downed or damaged power lines or a dislodged green box.
- 3 Wait for the utility crew to arrive to de-energize the power.
- 4 Do not exit until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.



### Only Exit if the Vehicle is on Fire —

- ▶ Cross your arms over your chest and make a clean jump out.
- ▶ Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- ▶ Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.
- ▶ Do not return to the vehicle.



### Bystanders —

- ▶ Do not approach the scene. Call 911 for help.
- ▶ Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything, including fences or guardrails.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

With winter weather on the way, now is the time to seal drafty windows. If you can see daylight around a window frame or if you can rattle a window, the window likely needs to be sealed. Visit [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver) to learn how and where to seal air leaks.

SOURCE: [WWW.ENERGY.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGY.GOV)



# Halloween Safety

Halloween is a time for candy, costumes and in some cases, outdoor lighting or inflatable decorations. While preparing for and enjoying the holiday, follow these safety precautions:

## Outdoor Lighting

- ▶ Inspect each electrical decoration. Check cords for cracking, fraying or bare wires, as they may cause a serious shock or start a fire. Inspect plugs for damage. Replace any damaged decorations.
- ▶ Make sure lights, animated displays or other electrical outdoor products are safety tested by a reputable laboratory such as UL (Underwriters Laboratory) and approved for outdoor use.
- ▶ Do not overload extension cords or allow them to run through water.
- ▶ Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into ground fault circuit interrupter-protected outlets.
- ▶ When decorating outside, always make sure to look up and check that you and any equipment, such as ladders, are at least 20 feet away from overhead power lines. Always carry a ladder or other long object or tool in a horizontal position.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Division and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer these tips:

## Costume Safety

- ▶ Wear costumes that are labeled flame resistant.
- ▶ Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape for added visibility.
- ▶ Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional for a proper fitting and instructions on how to use them.

- ▶ Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.
- ▶ Test the makeup you plan to use in advance for a possible allergy by putting a small amount on your arm.

## Food Safety

- ▶ Do not let your little ones (or anyone) eat candy or other treats until they have been inspected at home.
- ▶ Check all labels for potential food allergens.
- ▶ If you have very young trick-or-treaters, remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys from the goodie pile.
- ▶ Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as tiny pinholes, tears in wrappers or anything unusual.
- ▶ Limit your risk of questionable candy by only ringing doorbells of homes you know. Enjoy treats and decorate safely. Get more electrical safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Dress Up with Care for HALLOWEEN

When dressing your little ones (or yourself), keep these safety tips in mind



- ▶ Always wear costumes that are labeled flame resistant.
- ▶ Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape to improve visibility.
- ▶ Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional.
- ▶ Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.
- ▶ Test the makeup you plan to use in advance for a possible allergy.

In addition, inspect any plug-in decorations for signs of wear and tear (fraying or bare wires or broken plugs) and replace them if damaged.