



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1511 14,000 Rd, 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 Co-op, Inc.

Ron Holsteen, CEO

### Board of Directors

**Daniel Peterson**

President

**Bryan Coover**

Vice President

**Dareld Nelson**

Treasurer

**Bryan Huckle**

Secretary

**Rodney Baker**

Trustee

**Tom Ellison**

Trustee

**Larry Hubbell**

Trustee

**Diane McCartney**

Trustee

**Jason Zwahlen**

Trustee

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday

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

### Contact Us

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P.O. Box 368

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### Donations to Food for Kids

In 2017, Twin Valley donated  
**\$1357.28** to Food for Kids.

## FROM THE CEO

# Our Future Rests in Your Hands



Ron Holsteen

For folks new to Twin Valley Electric Cooperative (and for those old hands who might need reminding), let me introduce you to the Second Cooperative Principle, “Democratic Member Control,” one of seven guidelines that govern cooperative operations. That means you, as a member of Twin Valley, ultimately select who represents you on the cooperative’s board of directors and determines the strategic direction of our local, not-for-profit business.

One of the main duties of directors involves hiring a CEO/general manager. Since being hired in 2004, I’ve been responsible for overseeing the day-to-day affairs of running Twin Valley and ensuring that you receive a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of power.

But my hiring is not where the directors’ duties end—by no means. Your directors must constantly consider policies affecting the cooperative. For example, how much must we spend on maintenance? If we need a new substation, how will we build it? How will we finance it? How often

do we update our technologies and facilities to stay efficient?

It’s not an easy task. Responsibilities stack up, and time commitments are considerable. Besides attending hours of meetings every month, each director must continuously educate himself or herself about the complex business of electricity production and distribution. Directors also spend a lot of their free time studying the intricacies of strategic planning and financial decision-making. We encourage our directors to take a series of courses and receive their Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate to help them better understand their duties and responsibilities of serving on the board.

But the learning doesn’t end

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## Increase Efficiency as Temperatures Plummet

A cold winter can bring an equally cold reality: higher heat bills. This winter, keep your costs and energy use as low as possible by following these winter efficiency tips:

- ▶ Have a heating system checkup and change your filter every month or two during winter.
- ▶ Make sure there's plenty of insulation in attics and crawl spaces. Check the ductwork that's in your basement or attic. Air leaks in ducts can account for about 20 to 30 percent of wasted heat. If there are leaks or holes in your ducts, use sealant or metal tape.
- ▶ Check for gaps and air leaks around doors, windows, outlets, etc. Seal these areas with caulk, sealant, weather stripping, etc.
- ▶ Use a programmable thermostat to set your temperature lower when you're away to prevent energy waste from heating an empty house. Using a programmable thermostat can help you save about \$180 each year.
- ▶ Leave space around heating registers so warm air can easily enter the area.
- ▶ Consider replacing older heating equipment with newer, more efficient systems.
- ▶ A space heater can help increase the temperature of a room rather than cranking up the heat to warm the entire house. By using a space heater correctly, you can turn down your thermostat and place less demand on your furnace.
- ▶ Keep curtains open to let direct sunlight heat the home during daylight hours. Remember to close your curtains in the evening to reduce drafts.
- ▶ Turn your water heater down to the "warm" setting, or to about 120 degrees, to cut back on the energy waste and reduce the likelihood of scalds. Water heating consumes a higher percentage of heating costs than you might think, nearly a fifth.

For additional information on energy efficiency, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) or [EfficiencyResource.org](http://EfficiencyResource.org).

## Weathering Winter Outages

Anyone who has weathered prolonged outages due to an ice or winter storm will tell you it is more than inconvenient. Such an outage during very cold weather creates an additional set of challenges and safety requirements. Prepare now to ensure you're not left in the cold when the next one happens.

Safe Electricity recommends assembling an emergency "kit" with essential items and more, such as:

- ▶ Flashlight, portable radio and extra batteries
- ▶ First-aid kit and essential medicines
- ▶ Non-perishable food
- ▶ Bottled water
- ▶ Basic tools and related materials
- ▶ Extra blankets; clothing to dress in layers; and outerwear, including hats, gloves and scarves
- ▶ Rags or duct tape to seal air leaks

If you have a wood stove or fireplace, keep plenty of extra wood on hand; and if you have a fuel-based heater, have extra fuel and the means to vent the fumes.

Know how to get area weather updates, by using a weather radio, mobile notification system you can enroll in, mobile app, etc. Visit state and local websites for emergency outage plans in your area. Develop an emergency plan with your family so everyone knows what to do in an outage. Keep your mobile devices fully charged and ready to use when a storm is headed your way.

### Additional tips for weathering a cold weather outage:

- ▶ Dress in several layers of warm clothing. Wear a hat to avoid the loss of heat from your head.
- ▶ Reduce the amount of wasted heat by closing doors to rooms not being used, and securing curtains and blinds to reduce heat loss from windows.
- ▶ Never use an oven or charcoal grill to heat your home!

coal grill to heat your home!

- ▶ Reduce the risk of spoiling food during an outage by lowering the temperature of your refrigerator as low as possible, and avoid opening the refrigerator doors unless it becomes necessary. By doing so, you can keep your food cool for up to 24 hours.
- ▶ Protect your sensitive electronics by unplugging devices such as televisions and computers. Use surge protectors to protect electronics when the power comes back on.
- ▶ Be alert to the signs of frostbite, which can include loss of feeling in the extremities, and hypothermia, such as shivering, memory loss, incoherence or drowsiness.
- ▶ Use caution when going outside. Downed power lines could be hidden by snow or ice. If you see a downed power pole or line, stay far away and report it to your electric cooperative.

A portable generator can provide power in the event of an outage. Have an electric cord long enough to keep the generator at least 20 feet from any door, window or vent to keep carbon monoxide out of the home. Read your instruction manual before use and operate your generator in well-ventilated areas.

Never use a portable generator in the home or garage, and never plug it into a home wall outlet or connect it directly to the home's electrical system. Install battery-powered or battery back-up carbon monoxide detectors near floors on each level of your home.



# Our Future Rests in Your Hands

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there. Numerous other classes and seminars cover topics that must be part of each director's pool of knowledge. And after all of that education, sorting through difficult choices remain.

Like any successful democracy, this decision-making process does not operate in the dark. We keep you informed about the financial condition of the cooperative, tell you when situations arise that could affect your bill or service and educate you about the issues involved.

We do this through these pages in the *Kansas Country Living* magazine, our statewide consumer publication, in letters or other communication included with your bills, and most importantly, during face-to-face conversations—whether at our annual meeting or through conversations in the local supermarket or at the Friday night high school games.

**In a democracy, member participation is crucial. That's why it is important for you to learn about how your co-op operates, attend our various meetings and let us know when issues arise that need our attention.**

In a democracy, member participation is crucial. That's why it is important for you to learn about how your co-op operates, to attend our various meetings and let us know when issues arise that need our attention. Consider giving your time, whether in service on the board or on various committees.

Cooperatives are different from other forms of businesses because of you, our members, and because of the way decisions are made. We welcome and encourage your involvement. After all, it's YOUR co-op.



Like us on Facebook

On Facebook, search for "Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc." and like our page for energy efficiency tips, cooperative news and outage updates.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

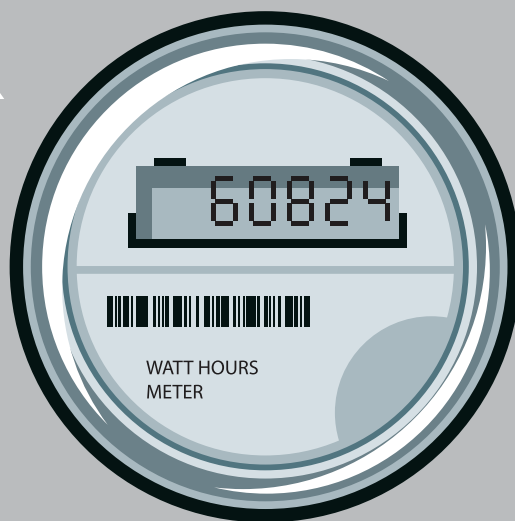
Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3 to 4 percent per year on water heating.



## DON'T TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

- ❌ Never break a meter seal.
- ❌ Never open a meter base.
- ❌ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.



If you know of or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



# Attention High School Juniors

## Apply for a FREE Trip of a Lifetime!



Each year, students from Kansas join more than 1,800 youth in Washington, D.C., to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This year's Youth Tour is scheduled for June 7 to 14, 2018.

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

### 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 provided by Twin Valley regarding electric cooperatives. There will also be a **SHORT INTER-**



Kansas delegates attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp along with students from three other states to develop leadership skills and learn about co-ops. The 2018 CYLC will be July 13 to 19.

**VIEW ON MARCH 2, 2018, AT 1 P.M.** to pick the winners. All participating students will receive a prize.

To apply please complete, sign and return the application below to Twin Valley, 1511 14,000 Rd, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS, 67330 **BY FEB. 16, 2018.**

### 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 Manahan at 866-784-5500.

## Contest Application for Youth Tour—Due Feb. 16

Mail or deliver to Twin Valley, 1511 14,000 Rd, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Twin Valley Account # \_\_\_\_\_

**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 2018 Youth Tour competition sponsored by Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_