



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 Cooperative, Inc.

**Angie Erickson**  
CEO

### Board of Trustees

**Bryan Coover**  
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Trustee

**Jared Nash**  
Trustee

**Jason Zwahlen**  
Trustee

### Office Hours

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

### Contact Us

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



## FROM THE MANAGER

### We Want to Hear From You



**Angie Erickson**

We live in a device-driven world. Our smartphones, tablets, laptops and assortment of other devices help us communicate and connect. Companies spend billions pushing

out a steady drumbeat of messages and information, and we are constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening on the other end?

At Twin Valley Electric, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Whether you text us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email or simply stop by to chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.

Because we are a cooperative, we have a different way of operating. Twin

Valley exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve. We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but instead, as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

Our annual meeting, held each year in April, is an opportunity to hear from you and other community members. We hope you consider attending this meeting.

We are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector, as technology and the drive for more renewables and a more balanced energy mix is impacting long-term planning. We will be navigating complex issues in the coming months and years. This is why it's so important we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course for the future.

*Continued on page 16B ►*

## JAN. 4 Cut Your Energy Costs Day

By sealing uncontrolled air leaks in your home, you can save **10%-20%** on heating and cooling bills.



# Stay Safe at Work and Home

Electrical safety is often an overlooked topic for employee orientation and training, but following on-the-job electrical safety tips can protect both employees and employers. These tips aren't just for the office, either. They can apply at home too.

## In General

- ▶ Do not complete electrical work if you are not qualified. Employees asked to change light fixtures, repair wiring, install outlets or other types of electrical work have been injured and killed on the job. It is best to leave electrical work to a professional electrician.

## Indoors

- ▶ Do not talk on a landline phone during a thunderstorm. Many people think this is a myth but it is not — a bolt of lightning striking a telephone line can come through the wires and enter a headset. That jolt can burst your eardrum or even cause cardiac arrest.
- ▶ Use high-quality extension cords with appropriate gauge and length endorsed by a reputable laboratory.
- ▶ Do not run extension cords under

carpet. Out of sight, out of mind, and cords could get damaged under the carpet or overheat, causing a fire.

- ▶ Extension cords should be a temporary solution. If your workplace needs more outlets, have a professional electrician install them.
- ▶ Do not overload the electrical system by plugging in too many items or items that draw too much power.
- ▶ Ask before using a space heater at work.
- ▶ Do not use damaged cords, plugs, outlets or outdated electrical equipment.
- ▶ Do not yank on an electrical cord to unplug something; grasp the plug instead.

## Outdoors

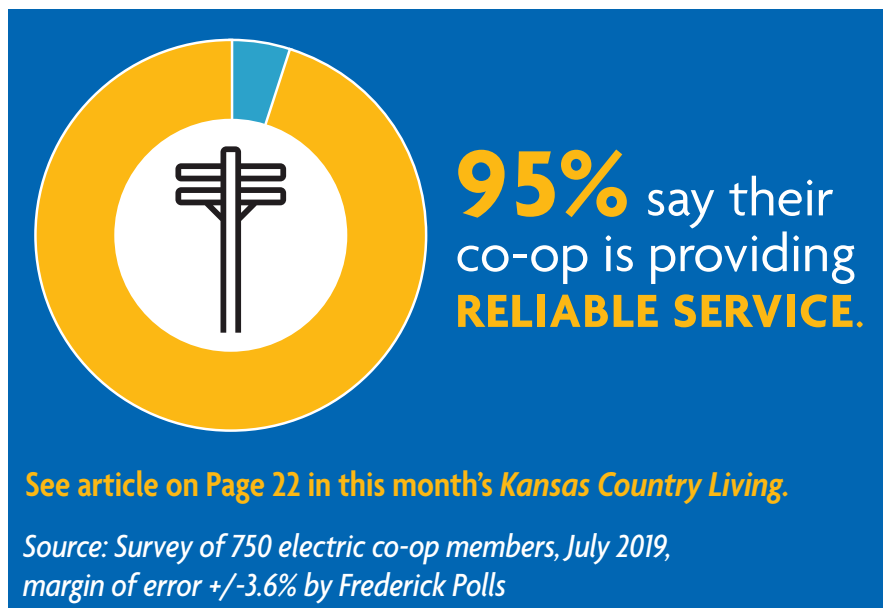
- ▶ Be vigilant about power line locations. Window washers, roofers, painters and other workers have been injured and killed after making contact with power lines either with a tool or object they were holding or by direct contact.
- ▶ If your employer asks you to trim trees, do not trim any foliage or

limbs within 10 feet of a power line (20 feet is better!). Trimming near power lines should be left to OSHA-certified line clearance workers.

- ▶ If you operate farm machinery or drive a truck with a hydraulic bed or lifts like a dump truck, a grain truck or arms/extensions like a garbage or concrete truck, always be aware of power line locations and use a spotter. If your truck, tractor or equipment comes in contact with a line, DO NOT get out. Call 911 and wait for crews to de-energize the power so you can exit safely.
- ▶ If you use scaffolding or a boom lift to raise you up, always be aware of power line locations.

## Around Water

- ▶ Water and electricity do not mix as it greatly increases the chance of shock. Keep all electrical equipment away from standing water or damp conditions indoors and outdoors and do not operate equipment with wet hands.
- ▶ Make sure outlets near a water source and all outdoor outlets are ground-fault circuit interrupter protected.



## We Want to Hear

**from You** *Continued from page 16A ▶*

As CEO, I continually learn from our members about their priorities so we can better serve you — because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and in the future, we depend on hearing from you. I hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective. You can always reach me directly at 620-784-5500 or aerickson@twinvalleyelectric.com — I'm listening.

# Why is My Power Out?

When power goes out, we are working hard to restore it.

We hate it when the power goes out just as much as you do. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

**STORMS** — Conditions brought on by storms such as high winds, ice and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning itself does not impact outages as much as people think, but it can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can cause a problem if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer. Strong high winds and ice that accumulates on lines can also impact distribution.

**TREES AND VEGETATION** — Branches, limbs or trunks can fall on lines and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines or other equipment. Ice and wind can make matters worse. This is why we continuously work to keep rights of way near power lines and equipment clear.

**ANIMALS** — It is estimated that 11% of all outages are caused by our furry friend the squirrel. They love to chew

on the weatherproof coating around lines. Other critters like turkeys, snakes and seagulls can interfere with service too. We put non-harmful devices on our equipment and lines to make it less comfortable for animals to perch, rest or make a nest. A bird on a wire is harmless and safe as long as it touches the line and nothing else.

**ACCIDENTS** — Cars, trucks and farm equipment that collide with a utility pole can cause an outage.

**PUBLIC DAMAGE** — Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all cause interruptions in the energy chain.

**OVERLOAD** — This happens where demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.

**EQUIPMENT ISSUES** — We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions and we address those problems as soon as they happen.

Please contact Twin Valley Electric at 866-784-5500 with questions about outages or to learn more about the steps we take to provide reliable service.

## WHY IS MY POWER OUT?

When the power goes out, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Here are some common reasons the power goes out:

### STORMS



Mother Nature can interfere with power delivery.

### VEGETATION



This is why we work hard to keep power lines clear.

### ANIMALS



Curious animals can cause damage, especially squirrels.

### ACCIDENTS



Run-ins with a utility pole or other equipment can cause an outage.

### PUBLIC DAMAGE



Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all interfere.

### OVERLOAD



This happens when demand spikes, like on a hot summer day.

### EQUIPMENT ISSUES



We maintain and inspect equipment regularly, but sometimes malfunctions occur.

Thank you for your patience during outages.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss by up to 10%.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





# Attention High School Juniors

## Apply for a FREE Trip of a Lifetime!



During the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., students meet with our elected officials. Next year's tour will be June 18-25, 2020.

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



Each year, campers go rafting during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Next year's camp is scheduled for July 10-16, 2020.

information provided by Twin Valley regarding electric cooperatives. There will also be a **SHORT INTERVIEW ON JAN. 20 AT 1 P.M.** to pick the winners. 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 JAN. 10.**

### Youth Tour Selection Process

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

To find out more, contact Jennifer Manahan at 866-784-5500.

## Contest Application for Youth Tour — Due Jan. 10

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ 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 2020 Youth Tour competition sponsored by Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

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