



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.

### Board of Trustees

**Bryan Coover**  
President

**Larry Hubbell**  
Vice President

**Dareld Nelson**  
Treasurer

**Bryan Hucce**  
Secretary

**Rodney Baker**  
Trustee

**Tom Ellison**  
Trustee

**Diane McCartney**  
Trustee

**Jared Nash**  
Trustee

**Jason Zwahlen**  
Trustee

### Staff

**Angie Erickson**  
CEO

### Office Hours

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

### Contact Us

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

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Acknowledging the Positive



**Angie Erickson**

When this issue of *Kansas Country Living* is delivered to your mailbox, we will all be busy preparing for the holidays and the end of 2021.

After all of the decorating, shopping, wrapping, baking, celebrating, gathering, and undecorating is finally over, we will look to 2022 and wonder what's in store for us. At the same time, we will look back on 2021. Considering that our news is still filled with the coronavirus, and now inflationary costs, and political turmoil, it is easy to think of 2021 negatively. However, if we think hard enough, it was a year filled with positives also.

At Twin Valley, while 2021 had its challenges, good things happened that we should acknowledge and be thankful for. The first, and most important,

is that our employees went home uninjured at the end of each day. In fact, our employee group reached an impressive milestone — it has been five years since an employee has missed a day of work due to an on-the-job injury! Safety is critical in our industry, and we work to continually improve.

As a means of reducing our power costs, Twin Valley entered into a purchased power agreement to buy solar power from a solar farm located on our system. The solar production during summer peak hours will help us achieve significant savings for the cooperative for 25 years or more.

Improvements were made to our line clearance program. A significant portion of our system was treated to reduce vegetation growth, and additional tree trimming and removal was performed. Vegetation under and near power lines is the primary cause of power outages. This additional investment is necessary to keep up with the growth and keep

*Continued on page 16C ▶*



## MERRY AND BRIGHT

Don't add stress to your holiday season. Knowing how to properly use and hang lights could prevent injury or fire.



Make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.

Unplug light strands before changing a bulb or string fuse.



Do not use cords or plugs that are frayed or cracked.

Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab (UL).



Consider LED lights when replacing old strands. LEDs use 80-90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

# Deck the Halls Safely

There's nothing like putting up lights and decorations to get in the holiday spirit. It's something that many do each year without incident, yet the holidays are also one of the most hazardous times of the year when it comes to electrical fires and accidents.

Safe Electricity offers several tips as you deck the halls this season:

- ▶ When decorating outside, look up and around for power lines. Never throw lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- ▶ Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- ▶ Match plugs with outlets. Do not force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord.
- ▶ Outside, use only lights, cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use them. Ensure outdoor outlets or extension cords are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI).
- ▶ Never string more strands of lights together than recommended by the manufacturer.
- ▶ Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords. Use plastic or insulated hooks to hang lights.
- ▶ Do not attach cords to utility poles.
- ▶ The outside of your home is not the only place where you need to be cautious of electrical dangers.
- ▶ Use care when placing and decorating trees inside your home. Place fresh-cut and artificial trees away from heat sources such as registers, fireplaces and radiators.
- ▶ Water fresh-cut trees frequently.
- ▶ Turn lights off before you go to sleep.
- ▶ Set your lights up with a traditional timer or connect them to a smart speaker to allow for easy shut off.

Safe Electricity wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

## Cold Weather Rule

The Kansas Corporation Commission's (KCC) Cold Weather Rule restricts residential electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31 when temperature forecasts are below 35 degrees, as long as the consumer contacts the utility and makes alternate arrangements to pay their balance.

Electric cooperatives are not required to follow the KCC policy, and are responsible for establishing their own seasonal rules. Twin Valley Electric's Cold Weather Rule is nearly identical to KCC's rule.

Under the rules of both organizations, individuals who are unable to pay their bill and would like protection under the Cold Weather Rule must call Twin Valley's office at 866-784-



5500 to make a payment arrangement. In order to remain protected by the Cold Weather Rule, the individual must follow through with the arrangement.

If you want more information about our Cold Weather Rule, or if you have questions about billing and payment options, please call our office at 866-784-5500.

# 4 Energy-Wise Ways to Decorate Your Home

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking — and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10-\$25 and can be purchased at your local hardware store. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

For a more natural approach to decorating, many Christmas tree farms,



**LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're more resistant to breaking — and they're cool to the touch.**

and even retailers give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30 — and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season.

## Acknowledging the Positive *Continued from page 16A*

the power on for our members.

A new format for our billing statements was implemented at the beginning of 2021. This new format allows us to provide more information to our members and is designed to draw attention to key information quickly.

While COVID-19 continued to cause the cancellation of many gatherings and some travel, we were fortunate to have been able to hold our annual meeting in person. We also awarded scholar-

ships to two area high school seniors as a substitute for canceled Youth Tour and Leadership Camp trips. We were also able to hold high voltage safety demonstrations with a few groups as a safety educational offering.

As we wrap up 2021 and look forward to 2022, take time to acknowledge the positive things that happened in your life this year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## 12 Days of Holiday EFFICIENCY

Deck the halls with LED holiday lights.



Use a timer to turn off holiday lights at night.

Lower the thermostat when guests arrive.



Ask Santa for a smart or programmable thermostat to save energy.



Close the fireplace damper when a fire is not burning.



Unplug appliances and electronics before heading out of town.



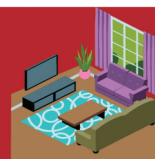
Gifting new electronics or appliances? Look for the ENERGY STAR® logo.



Keep the winter chill outdoors by sealing air leaks around your home.



Open the blinds and curtains during the day to let natural sunlight warm your home.



Consider rechargeable batteries and chargers for stocking stuffers!



Instead of opening the oven door, use the oven light to check the progress of your holiday feast!



Turn off household lights to enjoy the ambiance of your lighted Christmas tree.





# HOLIDAY SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Remember to keep electrical safety in mind this holiday season!

Read the safety tips below,  
then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.



D	T	T	X	M	L	N	L	W	V	B	H	G	P	M
P	E	Y	E	N	H	S	A	G	E	T	Q	W	C	O
D	C	R	A	K	P	T	C	K	J	X	N	C	J	Q
E	X	R	E	I	O	J	I	T	B	S	L	E	Y	I
M	P	W	W	T	W	F	R	V	V	Z	U	U	V	J
X	R	K	Z	Z	A	T	T	L	X	W	L	M	X	Y
D	T	Z	G	P	N	W	C	C	N	L	Z	A	H	Z
I	N	S	P	E	C	T	E	D	P	F	R	R	Z	T
D	P	G	V	B	E	E	L	L	Q	P	H	V	W	F
A	J	K	F	L	B	A	E	S	K	H	I	Z	W	M
N	M	V	D	T	W	V	X	R	I	R	B	H	U	C
C	O	N	B	B	R	W	O	H	O	W	Q	N	Q	P
X	A	W	X	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	C	E	D
C	K	L	B	T	K	R	A	J	B	C	M	D	Y	P
X	C	M	A	Y	S	K	B	O	Y	Q	M	Q	K	Q

- ▶ Do not overload electrical outlets with too many **decorations** or appliances.
- ▶ Make sure your Christmas tree is **watered** daily.
- ▶ Turn off all **electrical** decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- ▶ Never leave a **candle** burning if you're not in the room.
- ▶ Extension cords used for holiday decorations should always be **inspected** for damage or exposed wires.

