



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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**Angie Erickson**  
CEO

### Office Hours

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

### Contact Us

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Small Change Can Change Lives



**Angie Erickson**

The holiday season is finally here. Family traditions and gathering with friends and loved ones make this season a time of giving and spreading joy. This

includes giving to the most vulnerable in our local area.

When you are a member of Twin Valley Electric Cooperative (TVEC), you can help us spread good by participating in our Operation Round Up program throughout the year. When you “round up” your monthly bill from TVEC and donate to this fund, you make a big difference in a local child’s life. Backpacks filled with food are sent home from school with children in need to ensure they don’t go hungry.

The cooperative principle Concern for Community has been important to TVEC since we first brought electricity to this community in the 1940s, thereby improving the quality of life in our rural area. This Concern for Community is also why we started our Operation Round Up program many years ago.

Across the country, more than 350 electric co-ops have an Operation Round Up program, and together, we’ve raised millions for local communities. This shows that small donations, no more than \$0.99 per month, from electric co-ops like ours, over time, can collectively make a big impact.

Please consider joining Operation Round Up if you aren’t already participating. You may join by calling us at 800-784-5500.

I hope all our members have a joyous holiday season. May it be merry and bright!



Our office will be closed on Dec. 23, Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 for the holidays.

## A Storm Is Always Ready

### ARE YOU?

When Mother Nature threatens to unleash a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

### Your kit should include:

- ▶ Bottles of water
- ▶ Nonperishable food
- ▶ Can opener



- ▶ Portable phone charger
- ▶ Flashlights
- ▶ Batteries

- ▶ First-aid supplies
- ▶ Hand sanitizer
- ▶ Prescriptions



- ▶ Pain reliever
- ▶ Warm clothing
- ▶ Blankets

- ▶ Battery-operated radio
- ▶ Important documents
- ▶ Books and games



- ▶ Cash money
- ▶ Baby supplies
- ▶ Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure items have not expired and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

## Stay Safe During Severe Winter Weather

### Ice and other severe winter weather can result in power outages

When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur. Roadways can be dangerous. Do all you can to prepare your pantry, home and car for the next severe winter storm. Once you are ready, watch and listen for weather bulletins mentioning winter storms, blizzard warnings or windchill dangers.

#### Supplies for the Storm

At home, have enough nonperishable food, water and medical supplies and medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing 1 gallon of water per person per day. Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charging sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them too. Additional items to have ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets and warm clothing.

#### Readying the House

Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

#### Prepare Your Vehicle with an Emergency Kit

According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs) and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

#### Prepare Your Vehicle

Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32nd of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

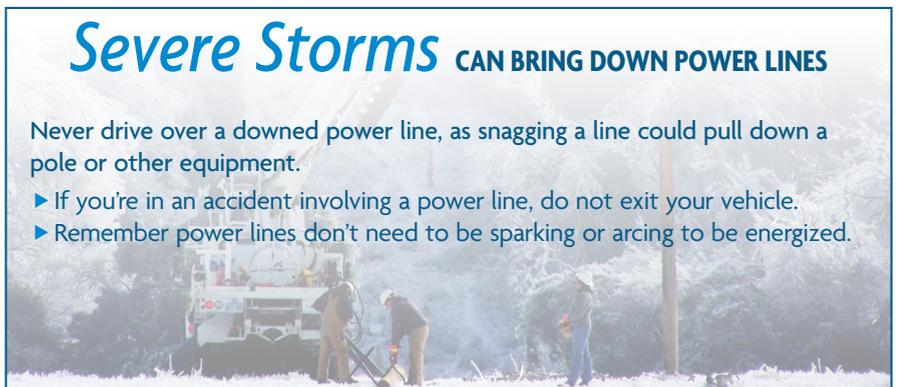
Know that when the power goes out, we work hard to restore it safely and efficiently.

For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## Severe Storms CAN BRING DOWN POWER LINES

Never drive over a downed power line, as snagging a line could pull down a pole or other equipment.

- ▶ If you're in an accident involving a power line, do not exit your vehicle.
- ▶ Remember power lines don't need to be sparking or arcing to be energized.



# How the Grid Keeps Reliable Power Flowing BY PAUL WESSLUND

## New report reveals grid reliability is increasing despite new challenges

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, also known as NERC, recently graded the nation's grid on reliability. The report revealed the electric grid is highly reliable and continues to improve despite emerging challenges that may stress it in the coming years.

NERC's "2022 State of Reliability" reports that the network of power plants, transmission lines and associated equipment — often referred to as the bulk power system or BPS — repeatedly improved its performance over the last six years. That trend comes despite the challenges of adding more energy generated from renewable sources and facing increasingly extreme weather patterns.

The impact of widespread, extreme weather events has underscored the need to plan for extreme scenarios related to resource adequacy and energy supply. Spurred by federal policies and market conditions, a drastic decline in available power generation resources has made complex electric systems more difficult to balance. As the nation's energy mix evolves and flexible generation (from sources that are fuel-assured, weatherized and dispatchable) decreases, the risk of energy shortfalls is more likely.

Despite these challenges that lie ahead, when it comes to measuring grid reliability, the year 2021 saw improvement in both the year-over-year and five-year average.

To understand the NERC report, it helps to know the system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world. The U.S. bulk power system is made up of more than 7,300 power plants and nearly 160,000 miles of high-voltage power lines. This system is responsible for delivering the majority of electricity to local utilities and their millions of miles of lower-voltage lines that ultimately connect homes, businesses and other energy consumers to the electric grid.

The electricity that the bulk power system carries to you must be generated at the exact same time as you flip the switch to use it. If

that sounds like a mind-boggling job of high-tech coordination, it is. And the national grid does it every second of every day.

Despite that complexity and the widely reported threats like severe weather and cyberattacks, NERC says the grid continues to perform in a highly reliable and resilient manner overall, with year-over-year improvement, demonstrating the success of actions taken by the energy industry.

Here are a few of the major challenges the electric sector is facing — and NERC's recommendations for facing these challenges head-on.

### Extreme Weather

Given the frequency and intensity of severe weather that affects electric operations, NERC recommends a shift in focus from just making sure there's ample energy supply to putting measures in place to withstand, adapt, protect against and recover from the impacts of extreme weather events.

Much of the NERC assessment focuses on the February 2021 event in Texas (Winter Storm Uri) when six days of below-freezing temperatures left some people without power for as many as four days. NERC advises steps to provide more transmission connections across the country so power can be more easily shared. NERC also sets plans to better prepare equipment for cold weather — as many generating units failed in the freezing temperatures.

### Beefing Up Cybersecurity

Electric utilities repelled threats from what NERC called "increasingly bold cyber criminals" and referred to a relatively new term for using the internet for political and social protest, "hactivism." NERC has established the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center that gathers information about the latest cyber threats and advises utilities about safeguards to take that supplement existing cybersecurity programs.

Across the U.S., electric cooperatives are working with national and local partners to fight cyber threats and add resiliency to establish relationships, provide tools, share resources and training information to continuously improve cyber protection. In Kansas, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., of which your electric co-op is a member, provides support and resources for co-ops to combat cybersecurity threats.

### Increased Renewable Energy

Renewable fuels like wind and solar are clean energy choices, but they come with drawbacks for a smooth-running grid at any hour of the day. One major downside is they depend on whether the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. NERC calls them "variable energy resources" and sees a long-term solution in large-scale batteries that can store renewable energy so it can be available whenever it's needed. Although battery technology is rapidly improving, NERC notes that utilities should continue to rely on natural gas-fired power plants to produce additional electricity when renewable options aren't available.

Today's energy landscape is wide-ranging and rapidly changing, yet the U.S. electric grid continues to keep power flowing. Kansas electric cooperatives are working closely with grid operators and power generators and suppliers like Kansas Electric Power Cooperative Inc. and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation to provide the dependable electricity you rely on every minute of every day.

**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.**

**The North American Electric Reliability Corporation recently graded the nation's grid on reliability. The report revealed the electric grid is highly reliable and continues to improve despite unprecedented hurdles like increasingly severe weather patterns and a transition in how electricity is produced.**

## 5 Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Twin Valley Electric is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five ways to increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

**1 MIND THE THERMOSTAT.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you are home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

**2 BUTTON UP YOUR HOME.** The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account

for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

**3 USE WINDOW COVERINGS WISELY.** Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

**4 CONSIDER YOUR APPROACH TO APPLIANCE USE.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy

even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

**5 THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up — beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://twinvalleyelectric.coop) for additional energy-saving tips.

## New Year's Safety Resolutions

Consider these safety-themed resolutions this year:

1. Do not drive distracted. Watch for work zones.
2. Do not place a cell phone on bedding or under a pillow.
3. If you see a downed power line, stay away and call 911.
4. If you are in a vehicle accident involving a downed line, do not get out.
5. Do not take on electrical work if you are not qualified.
6. Never use a portable generator indoors, in a garage or in an enclosed area.
7. Test GFCI outlets monthly to ensure they are working.
8. Ensure your home's electrical system is up to code.
9. Look up and look out for overhead power lines when working outside.
10. Call 811 prior to your next digging project.

