



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP

NEWS

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Twin Valley Sponsors Graves on Trip to the Nation's Capital

HADLEY GRAVES, rising senior from Labette County High School, recently represented Twin Valley Electric at the 2025 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held from June 14-20. During their time in Washington, D.C., students deepened their understanding of America's electric cooperatives and developed their leadership skills while connecting with peers from across the cooperative network.

Twenty-seven outstanding student representatives from Kansas were selected by their electric co-ops through a competitive application process of testing and interviews. They joined nearly 2,000 students across the country, including four from Hawaii who travel with the Kansas delegation each year.

The Youth Tour kicked off in Topeka with a welcome dinner and icebreaker activities, followed by an exclusive night tour of the Kansas State Capitol led by State Treasurer Steven Johnson and Kansas Representative Kyle Hoffman, alumni of the Youth Tour program.

In Washington, D.C., students explored iconic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, and The People's House — A White House Experience, along with numerous monuments and memorials. Visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Smithsonian museums

offered powerful insights into history and culture.

On June 19, during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) National Youth Day, students were inspired by a dynamic lineup of speakers, including NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, Olympic medalist Mike Schlappi, and the 2025 National Youth Leadership Council spokesperson Maggie Martin.

In addition to the Youth Day program, the Kansas and Hawaii delegations joined peers from Colorado and Wyoming for an engaging leadership workshop led by nationally recognized youth leadership expert Craig Hillier.

Students also had the unique opportunity to meet with U.S. Senator Roger Marshall to ask thoughtful questions on a range of topics that mattered to them, gaining firsthand insight into the legislative process and the role of elected officials.

Beyond the educational experiences, students enjoyed unique opportuni-



Hadley Graves recently represented Twin Valley at the 2025 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 14-20.

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Avoid Fines, Injuries and Power Outages

National Safe Digging Day, or 811 Day, is upon us. Easy to remember due to its 8/11 date, the day serves as a good reminder to have underground utilities marked before breaking ground. Having utilities marked is free and easy to do; simply call 811 two to three business days before starting your project. While state laws vary, utility companies generally have two to three days to respond to your request.

Why is it necessary to get buried utilities marked? Underground lines are unyielding and their path is unpredictable. Digging in an unmarked yard can mean striking an underground utility line, which can cause serious injury. Damaging a utility line can also cause unwanted service disruptions, including a power outage, as well as a hefty fine.

“While it can be tempting to skip the important step of calling before you dig, it can be a costly and dangerous omission,” says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. “Underground utility lines could be anywhere. They also shift over time and can be found just a few inches from the surface.”

Every project, big or small, requires advance notification to 811. To start the underground utility marking process, call 811 or visit www.call811.com. Examples of projects that require utility location include installing a fence, a mailbox post, a deck or

patio and planting trees and shrubs, among others. Any project that breaks ground requires that underground utilities be marked.

If a contractor is involved, check with that person to determine who will make the request. Locators do not mark private lines such as service to outbuildings, underground sprinkler systems or a gas lines to grills, for example. Private lines are the homeowner’s responsibility.

BEFORE DIGGING IN, TAKE THESE FIVE STEPS TO SAFER DIGGING:

- 1 Pre-mark the proposed dig area with white paint or white flags.
- 2 Call 811 or submit your locate request online before you dig. There is no charge for the service.
- 3 Wait the required amount of time (typically two to three business days).
- 4 Respect the marks and do not move any flags.
- 5 Dig with care. Avoid digging on top of or within 18-24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard.

For more information about electrical safety, visit www.safeelectricity.org. For more information about 811, visit www.call811.com.

Sending a Child to College? Discuss Safety First

As you are shopping for dorm room supplies, décor, snacks and other back-to-campus items, take a moment to discuss safety tips with your child before hugs and goodbyes. Here are some safety topics to help keep your college student safe.

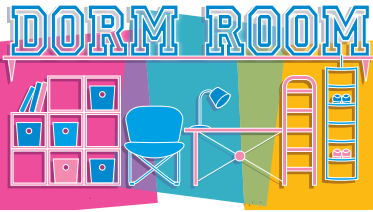
ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ When shopping for items that run on electricity, look for a safety endorsement label, such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories).
- ▶ Do not put a cellphone under a pillow or place it on or under bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.
- ▶ In the dorm or apartment, make sure outlets near water sources are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If they are not, contact the resident assistant, campus housing staff or landlord. Look for a test and reset button on the face of the outlet.
- ▶ Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power if too much current is drawn.
- ▶ Avoid overloading extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- ▶ Do not hang decorative lights with nails or tacks; always use plastic hooks.

- ▶ Do not run electrical cords across traffic paths or under rugs.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Find out what type of public safety department is on campus and how it functions; ask which services the department offers and the steps it takes to prevent crime.
- ▶ Locate emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Walk with a friend, especially at night.
- ▶ When attending events or parties, go with at least one person you know and trust. If your friend leaves, do not stay.
- ▶ Always be aware of your surroundings.
- ▶ Avoid being distracted (listening to music, texting, and so on) while walking on campus.
- ▶ Find out what types of mental health services or counseling the campus offers.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY: Tips for a Safe Semester

Be smart and stay safe. Share these tips with your campus-bound students.

DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS

Too much power draw = fire risk.

TIP: PLUG DORM ROOM FRIDGE DIRECTLY INTO WALL OUTLET.

DECORATE SAFELY

Don't use nails or tacks to secure cords or light strands.

TIP: USE PLASTIC HOOKS TO HANG STRING LIGHTS.

NEVER USE DAMAGED CORDS

Frayed or cracked cords can spark a fire.

TIP: IF A CORD LOOKS WORN, REPLACE IT — DON'T TAPE IT!

REPORT ELECTRICAL ISSUES FAST

Flickering lights? Warm outlets?

TIP: TELL CAMPUS MAINTENANCE ASAP; DON'T WAIT.

UNPLUG WHEN NOT IN USE

Even when off, devices can still draw power or overheat.

TIP: UNPLUG FANS, CHARGERS AND APPLIANCES WHEN YOU'RE OUT.

NEVER CHARGE A PHONE UNDER PILLOWS OR BEDDING

It could overheat or catch fire.

TIP: CREATE A DEDICATED CHARGING STATION IN YOUR ROOM.

KEEP CORDS COOL & CLEAR

Don't run cords under rugs, beds or doorways.

TIP: KEEP CORDS VISIBLE TO AVOID OVERHEATING.

Starting a new project?

1

NOTIFY

Follow these 5 STEPS for safe digging

NOTE 811 does not mark privately owned utility lines, invisible fences or sprinkler systems. Call a private utility locator for these.

WHAT DO ALL THE FLAGS MEAN?

2

WAIT

Call 811 or make a request online two to three days before you plan to start your project.

3

CONFIRM

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will mark underground lines.

4

RESPECT

Confirm all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.

5

DIG CAREFULLY

Respect the markers and use them as a guide for the duration of your project.

Do not dig on top of or within 18-24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard.

SAFETY TIP

August is Back-to-School Safety Month, so let's remember to play it safe as we begin a new school year. A friendly reminder to slow down as you drive through residential areas and school zones.

TWIN VALLEY SPONSORS GRAVES ON TRIP TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

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ties to bond with peers from across the country — trading state pins with other state delegations and taking in the sights during a scenic dinner cruise on the Potomac River.

“What impacted me most was the realization that electric cooperatives across the entire country came together to make this trip a reality,” Graves said. “Coming from a tiny town, it’s a reminder that our world is so much bigger than it sometimes feels. I am so incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity to see the capital city of our nation and I have loved every minute. While there were so many things that inspired me, the speakers during the NRECA youth program were incredible. The stories of overcoming what can be your greatest enemy — your mind — and standing out when you can’t stand up are lessons I will not soon forget. I will always remember that I met friends from Hawaii, which up until now seemed too much of a fantastical place to even exist. I can never forget the amount of kindness shown to me here from strangers, friends and most of all our incredible chaperones who put together this fantastic experience for us.”

During the conference, Dominic Hernandez, sponsored by Midwest Energy, was elected by his peers as the 2026 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council. Alongside 43 other student leaders from across the country, Hernandez will assist at PowerXchange, NRECA’s Annual Meeting, to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, in March 2026.

Students who participated in the 2025 Youth Tour are also eligible to apply for the NRECA Glenn English Scholarship. For more information about the Youth Tour or other KEC youth programs, please contact Marsha Moses at Twin Valley Electric Cooperative at 866-784-5500.

3 Smart Home Technologies to Help You Save Energy

Smart technologies make our homes more comfortable, convenient and energy efficient. By connecting your home Wi-Fi network, smart devices automate everyday tasks, like lighting, heating, cooling and home security, and they can even communicate with other smart devices within the home.

While not all smart home products are specifically designed with energy savings in mind, there are several smart technologies that can help you lower your home energy use. Here are the top three smart home devices to help you save.

SMART THERMOSTATS

Smart or not, your thermostat is the most effective tool for controlling energy use, as heating and cooling typically account for the largest portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats enable you to adjust the indoor temperature through an app, giving you full control from anywhere on the go. Many smart thermostats feature learning capabilities, which allow them to adjust the thermostat based on previous behavior and patterns.

According to the Department of Energy, smart thermostats can reduce annual heating and cooling bills by more than 8%. With models as low as \$65, they typically pay for themselves in one year.

SMART LIGHTING

Smart LED bulbs use less electricity than traditional bulbs and can be scheduled or turned off (or on) remotely through a smartphone app. Smart bulbs are available in a range of shapes, brightness levels, colors and more, so shop for the products that work best for your home lighting needs.

Many smart bulbs include motion



sensors that turn on or off based on room activity, further optimizing home energy use. If you’re new to smart lighting, try a home starter kit. Prices for kits range from \$70 to \$300-plus, depending on how many bulbs you need.

SMART PLUGS

Smart plugs are inexpensive gadgets that can help you save energy. Many electronic devices consume power even when turned off (known as “phantom load”), which can impact your energy bills. An estimated 5% to 15% of household energy use is attributed to phantom loads. Smart plugs are simply plugged into an electrical outlet and connected to your Wi-Fi network. When set up, the smart plug can cut power (or return power) to non-smart devices, like coffee makers, phone chargers and other items that draw phantom load.

Many smart plugs can be paired with popular smart hubs, like Alexa or Google Nest, or controlled through the plug’s associated app. Smart plugs are simple to use and a set of four can be purchased for as little as \$25.

If you’re looking for new ways to save energy, consider these budget-friendly and convenient smart home technologies.