



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

# TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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## Co-op Connections Card Savings Update

In August, Twin Valley members filled 29 prescriptions using the Co-op Connections Card and saved **\$104.56!** That makes an annual savings of **\$1,621.97!**

### FROM THE MANAGER

## How Electric Co-ops Are Special

Every October since 1930, not-for-profit cooperatives of all kinds have recognized National Cooperative Month as a way to educate the public about how co-ops work and to appreciate their many members.

This year, Twin Valley Electric highlights the notions that guide all co-ops: the seven cooperative principles. These principles lead electric cooperatives like Twin Valley to do business in a better way every single day. Here are real-life examples of how the principles affect your cooperative.

### No. 1: Voluntary and Open Membership & No. 2: Democratic Member Control

Co-ops are open to anyone who is able to use its services, which means any person who moves onto Twin Valley lines is allowed membership. Annual meetings serve as a way for members to get to know the people who run their co-op, and it's where members are updated on business matters. Every year in April, Twin Valley convenes for its annual membership meeting.

“Democratic member control” means members vote for the Directors who represent them on a board, which governs the cooperative. Our annual meeting also serves as the forum for electing directors.

### No. 3: Members' Economic Participation

Because electric cooperatives are owned by its members, they do not create profits for distant shareholders. Any excess revenue—called “margins”—is allocated back to the membership in the form of capital credits. Capital credits are “retired” and then paid back to members each year based on their purchases of electricity from the cooperative. Margins are used by the co-op as working capital for a period of time, then paid back to individual members.

Twin Valley has retired \$1,417,505 in capital credits to members since 1959.

Allocating and retiring excess revenue to members helps distinguish cooperatives. We're proud to support our communities by putting money back into the local economy—and into the pockets of those we serve. It makes our business model special.

### No. 4: Autonomy and Independence

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across America. They're found in 47 states, and cooperative-owned electric lines cover 42 percent of the nation's land mass. But what's unique is that each cooperative is an auto-

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Ron Holsteen

## NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

## Tips on Insulating Your Attic



William Worthy

With winter upon us, let us talk about insulation. Attic insulation to be exact.

As the days of October fly by, we are reminded of the upcoming winter months and the holidays that we cherish in our society. As you plan holiday parties and spend time with friends and loved ones, ways to control your winter heating will hopefully make your time more enjoyable without being concerned with sticker shock when you open your Twin Valley bill.

I have addressed losses through poorly sealed windows and doors in previous articles and talked about electronic vampires that suck kilowatt-hours even though you think they are turned off. So with winter upon us, let us talk about insulation. Attic insulation to be exact.

We have to remember that heat rises, and your efforts to stop this should be directed toward the ceiling of your house instead of your exterior walls. Your exterior walls need to be sealed to stop the influx of cold air and your ceiling needs to be insulated to stop the heat from escaping. There are two rules of thumb when it comes to placing ceiling insulation.

First, always install the insulation as tight to the living space as possible. Translation, the insulation should be placed directly behind the finished wall surface of a heated room. The insulation should not be applied in the roof rafters unless the ceiling is sheetrock or other finishes are applied directly to the rafters. There is nothing to be gained by insulating a cold attic from the cold outdoors.

The second rule is the paper moisture barrier on your insulation. You should never be able to see this paper moisture barrier. If you can see the paper, it either is installed in the wrong location or installed facing the wrong direction. To prevent moisture build up due to condensation, the moisture barrier should be installed tight to the living space so it can stay warm and this will stop condensation from forming.

If you have converted an attic

into living space that needs to be heated, insulating the space from the cold can be difficult. Any insulation in the floor needs to be removed so the heat will rise from the heated living space below and then it needs to be trapped inside the converted attic space to keep it warm. This can be difficult. Generally, these spaces have sloped ceilings and knee walls that can force the insulation to have to be molded to fit or cut in places that it might do more harm than good.

In closing, remember cold attics need to breathe as to prevent condensation buildup. Air should be forced into the attic from a low area such as a soffit or overhang, and exit high, such as at the peak. Always make sure your insulation does not hinder this process or mold issues might develop.

Have a great Halloween, and I'll see you again next month. As always, comments or questions are welcome. Please send them to [wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop](mailto:wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop).



For more tips on how to save energy—and money—visit [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

# How Electric Co-ops Are Special Continued from page 16-A ▶

mous, independent business.

We work with our co-op neighbors, but Twin Valley members are the sole governors of Twin Valley. Our member-elected board of Directors approves policies and resolutions that form the way we do business.

## No. 5: Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives have a charge to keep their members informed—not just about cooperative business, but also about topics like energy efficiency, safety, and community contribution. For example, the *Kansas Country Living* magazine with our newsletter in the center is one way Twin Valley keeps its members up on relevant news.

You can also stay informed via our website [www.twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://www.twinvalleyelectric.coop) or on our Facebook page.

## No. 6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Even though co-ops are independent

entities, we still rely on one another to share resources, information, and, in some cases, manpower.

Electric co-ops have long relied on one another to get power restored more quickly after severe weather emergencies. Called “mutual-aid agreements,” it works just as it sounds: When Twin Valley needs extra hands after an ice storm or tornado, co-ops from neighboring towns and states help out. And when neighboring co-ops need help, Twin Valley sends crews to them.

Mutual-aid assistance gets power back on so much faster than we could with just our crews.

## No. 7: Concern for Community

Possibly the most visible of all the cooperative principles, the last is what drives electric co-ops to be good stewards of the communities they serve.

Twin Valley undertakes a variety



To learn more about co-ops and find one near you, visit [go.coop](http://go.coop).

of projects, from supporting the Food Bank to sponsoring several school and youth activities in our service territory. Twin Valley also makes Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants (REDLG) available for community and economic development projects in southeast Kansas.

While our first priority is delivering safe, affordable, reliable electricity to those we serve, we also feel strongly about supporting and contributing to the development of our communities. Even if there were no ‘concern for community’ principle, every person who works at Twin Valley lives here, too. We’re friends and neighbors first.

## The 7 Cooperative Principles—What Are They? What do they Mean?

### 1 Voluntary and Open

**Membership**—Co-ops are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

### 2 Democratic Member Control

Co-ops are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-ops, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-ops at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

### 3 Members' Economic

**Participation**—Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the

capital of their co-op. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-op. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-op, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-op; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### 4 Autonomy and Independence

Co-ops are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-op autonomy.

### 5 Education, Training, and

**Information**—Co-ops provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-ops. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

### 6 Cooperation Among Co-ops

—Co-ops serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-op movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

### 7 Concern for Community

—While focusing on member needs, co-ops work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

# 'All-of-the-Above' Energy Strategy Needed

Climate-change plan will harm rural America **BY JO ANN EMERSON**

In late June, President Obama announced a series of actions to combat climate change. For electric co-ops, the outline hammered one point that has us ready to do battle: reducing the volume of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide—emitted from fossil fuel-burning power plants, both new and existing.

To that end, the President has instructed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act, a law last updated in 1990 that contains not a single line mentioning carbon dioxide. Under the sweeping mandate set forth, the White House risks shuttering the nation's entire coal fleet—roughly 37 percent of generation capacity—and driving up electric bills for all consumers.

NRECA and its member cooperatives oppose using the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases and will engage the administration at every turn to inject common sense back into policy discussions. Whether you agree with the President's underlying concerns about global warming or not, the basic fact is that short of closing all coal-fired power plants there are no economically viable tools currently available to accomplish his goals.

For several years, electric co-ops have warned the Obama administration that employing the Clean Air Act to curb power plant carbon dioxide emissions is badly misguided. Without significant modifications, co-ops feel the President's proposal will jack up electric bills for those who can least afford it—our consumer-members.

Rural residents already spend a greater chunk of their income on energy than those in urban communities. One of our first missions as not-for-profit electric co-ops remains keeping rates affordable—an important consideration since household income in our service territories runs 11 percent

lower than the national average and one person in six served by a co-op lives in poverty.

Forcing electric co-ops to shut down coal plants and switch to other fuels amounts to levying a punitive, regressive tax on rural America. History shows us this bad idea was tried once before, with bad results.

In the late 1970s policy-makers were concerned the U.S. would soon run out of natural gas, the main energy source for heating and cooking in many parts of our land. Congress's solution to the issue was passing the ill-conceived Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act of 1978, which prohibited burning natural gas to generate electricity. To meet growing demand for power, utilities were forced to choose

**Under the sweeping mandate set forth, the White House risks shuttering the nation's entire coal fleet—roughly 37 percent of generation capacity—and driving up electric bills for all consumers.**

either coal or nuclear power facilities.

For electric co-ops the timing couldn't have been worse. The measure kicked in just as generation and transmission co-ops (G&Ts) were in the middle of a major power plant building cycle. In the end, many found themselves shifting generation strategies midstream—an expensive proposition—and either partnering with investor-owned utilities in nuclear reactors or constructing state-of-the-art coal stations equipped with scrubbers and other pollution control technologies.

Thanks to the Fuel Use Act, power costs soared, and with them, cooperative electric bills. Realizing its mistake, Congress repealed the act in 1987. Yet because of the legislation, many electric cooperatives became

deeply invested in coal. Today, coal accounts for about 74 percent of the power produced by G&Ts and 55 percent of all electric cooperative electricity requirements.

Just like 35 years ago, the President's call for action has co-ops once again faced with shifting fuels—in this case, choosing natural gas or renewables over coal. However, in regions without access to natural gas pipelines, changing from coal to natural gas isn't feasible. On the renewables front, co-ops have emerged as leaders, adding "clean and green" power systems where it makes economic sense—such as solar photovoltaic arrays in the Southwest and wind farms across the Great Plains and Midwest. But the sun doesn't always shine (clouds) and the wind doesn't always blow, especially during periods of peak demand on hot, humid summer weekday afternoons or cold winter mornings below minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit when power is needed most. Keeping the lights on 24 hours a day, seven days a week requires traditional baseload generation—namely coal, nuclear, and hydro—as well as a full mix of fuels.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, on behalf of America's electric cooperatives, will continue to urge the President and his administration to work with co-ops on a real "all-of-the-above" energy strategy to keep electric bills affordable for rural Americans.



**Jo Ann Emerson**  
NRECA CEO

**JO ANN EMERSON is the CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. This article was originally published in the August issue of RE Magazine.**