



**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Outlet

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Lawrence

Staff

Christopher Parr
CEO

District Offices

McLouth Office
P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS 66054-0070

Topeka Office
1100 SW Auburn Road
Topeka, KS 66615

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

NOTICE

FreeState offices will be open 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, to Wednesday, Nov. 22, and closed Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24.

FROM THE CEO

Your Membership Matters Most

Last month we recognized Cooperative Month, and it is always a great reminder of the cooperative difference, but I wanted to take it one step further this month and dive into why cooperatives really are different. And, why your membership matters.

The most obvious way cooperatives are different than other utilities is that every decision is made locally, by trustees who are also members and your neighbors and friends. These nine individuals represent every single member. They meet monthly to discuss the cooperative's business and make decisions that impact not only you, but them as well.

Any member can be a trustee. Each April the members of FreeState elect their representation. Being a trustee is a great way to serve your cooperative. We will start our election process in early 2024, so watch for information about serving as a trustee. If you would like to consider applying to be a trustee, you can visit our website or give our office a call. We are here to answer your questions about serving and how you can get involved.

When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here. Each dollar that comes into the cooperative pays for the electricity consumed, and it is used to make improvements to our local infrastructure to ensure reliable

service. Every bill you pay is an investment in your service!

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we do not have shareholders.

Any margins at the end of the year are returned to the members in the form of capital credits when it is financially feasible to do so. In 2023, the cooperative returned \$800,000 to members. Other for profit utilities can't say that!

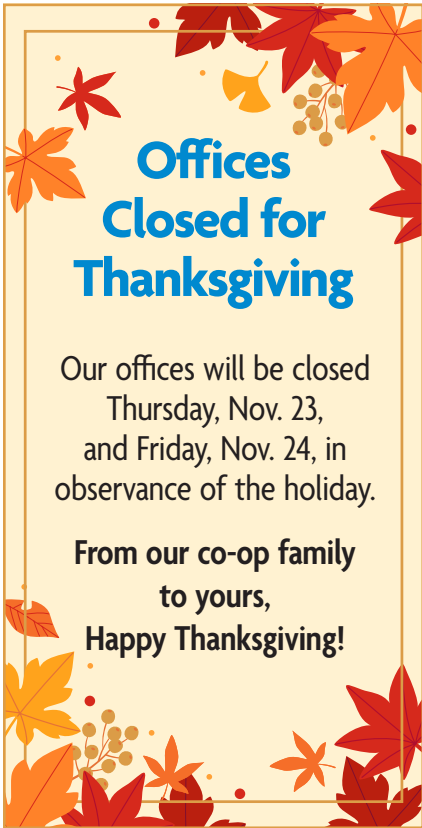
FreeState also provides members with opportunities to engage with the cooperative. You may have attended an annual meeting, or you may have brought your family to Crew at the Zoo. These are fun events that allow us to educate and engage with members on a more personal level. We use these events as opportunities to talk directly to members and gather feedback on how we can plan and adjust in the future. Our job is to serve you, and we want to do that to the best of our ability. When we don't know, we ask!

Speaking of asking, we are preparing for our next member satisfaction



Chris Parr

Continued on page 12D ►



Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24, in observance of the holiday.


From our co-op family to yours,
Happy Thanksgiving!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen. When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and pressure cookers consume less energy.

When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



ALL THE WAYS TO Pay Your Bill

We realize one payment method does not fit every member's needs. That's why FreeState Electric Cooperative offers multiple options for your convenience.

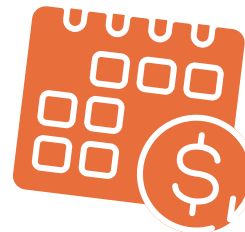


All members (except those enrolled in the Power Pay Program) receive a standard monthly bill for electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt.

If you need assistance, please call our member service representatives during regular business hours (Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) at **800-794-1989 AND PRESS ZERO** to speak to a representative.



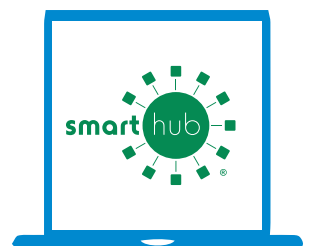
We want to make paying your monthly bill as simple and easy as possible for every member. With our range of payment options, you can pay your bill any time of day — in a way that suits you and your needs.



NEED ASSISTANCE?

Call 800-794-1989 and press zero.

MONDAY-THURSDAY 7 A.M.-5:30 P.M.





In Person at Either Office

Stop in either FreeState office, McLouth or Topeka, during normal business hours Monday-Thursday between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to pay your bill. Cash payments are accepted at both offices and the Topeka location has a drive-up window for your convenience.



By Mail

If you receive a monthly bill by mail, place your payment and remittance stub inside the provided envelope and mail to our McLouth office at **P.O. BOX 70, MCLOUTH, KS 66054**.



Drop Box

Drop boxes are located at both offices and are checked daily. Cash payments and checks must be placed in an envelope with your name and account number or a copy of your electric bill statement to ensure payment is applied to the correct account.



IVR (Secure Pay-by-Phone)

Our automated pay-by-phone system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 800-794-1989 option 3. This **FREE** service allows you to make a payment by phone with a credit card, debit card or check with **NO** fees. For security reasons and to comply with federal Red Flag Rules, FreeState employees cannot take your payment information by phone.



Cash Pay

FreeState accepts cash payments during office hours. You can also save a trip and pay cash conveniently while running errands with VanillaDirect or Western Union. To do so, bring a copy of your bill (or pull it up on SmartHub) and the amount of cash you wish to pay. Members will be assessed a \$1.50 convenience fee and have the option to either pay the entire bill at once or tell the cashier the desired payment amount. The payment will post within minutes to your account. Participating retailers include Dollar General, Walmart, CVS and more.



Automatic Monthly Payments

AutoPay will automatically withdraw your monthly bill directly from the financial institution or card, of your choice. You can set up AutoPay by:

- ▶ Visiting either office Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
- ▶ SmartHub>Billing & Payments>Auto Pay Program
- ▶ Call 800-794-1989, option 3, then option 4
- ▶ Download or request a form to complete. For your security, **DO NOT** email your financial information to the co-op.



SmartHub and SmartHub App

SMARTHUB ONLINE: Login from your computer, tablet or smartphone to make payments, view your billing history, set up automatic payments, schedule payments, check your electric use, and more at www.freestate.smarthub.coop.

SMARTHUB APP: Get accurate, timely account information and make secure payments with the touch of a button. The SmartHub app is free in the Apple Store or Google Play Store.



Pay Now

PayNow is an excellent option for members to pay online with a debit or credit card without creating an account or remembering a username and password. This one-time payment option is available at www.freestate.coop/payoptions.

Reminder: No Cold Weather Rule

FreeState Electric Cooperative does not participate in the Cold Weather Rule established by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), a rule which restricts electric disconnects from Nov. 1 through March 31, when temperature forecasts are 35 degrees or below.

FreeState Electric Cooperative is not mandated by this policy and has been responsible for establishing its own appropriate seasonal rules since 1996.

All accounts are subject to disconnection for nonpayment and are not governed by temperature.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT FREESTATE'S SEASONAL RULES OR BILLING OPTIONS, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT 800-794-1989.

Your Membership Matters Most *Continued from page 12A* ▶

survey. If you are one of the random members selected, we encourage you to participate and provide honest feedback for us. Tell us what we're doing well and make suggestions on ways we can better serve you. Are there programs and services that you want or need? What can we better communicate to you, or what are some ways we can be your trusted energy partner? We want to know because our success lies in your satisfaction. That is why we take the time to engage and listen to members.

You are a member-owner of your cooperative, and you can count on the FreeState team to maintain local skilled job opportunities, affordable electricity, first-class customer service, and community support.

As a member-owner of FreeState, you can count on your cooperative to maximize the value provided through programs and services. For example, we provide several options for members to make payments because we know each circumstance and need is different.

Another way we work for you is by providing important information. When the lights go out, so do we, and we work hard to communicate

restoration updates in a timely manner because that is what you expect and deserve. It's all part of our first-class customer service. We employ the best in the business with the knowledge and expertise to not only provide you with what you need but to run the cooperative in the most efficient and effective way we can — on your behalf.

As a member-owner of FreeState Electric Cooperative, you are the focus of every decision we make. Cooperatives are guided by seven principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness, community support, and service. We exist to serve you and provide reliable, safe and affordable electricity that comes with friendly and knowledgeable member service interactions.

While we may look different than we did 10, 20, 50 or 80 years ago, we are driven by the same core values as we were on day one. As technology evolves and communities grow, we are here to power your life.

We want you to be proud to be a member of FreeState Electric Cooperative, and know that your membership matters most.



McLouth Journeymen Linemen Wes Holthaus (right) and Marcus Steinlage (left) in the field. "I think it's something small we can do for a great cause," said Holthaus.



One of the Topeka line crews rocks their pink hard hats in October to support the Powered Up In Pink initiative for breast cancer awareness. Pictured are (from left): Journeyman Lineman Brooks Vaughn, Apprentice Blake Blessingame, and Journeyman Lineman Jordann Moody.