

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
1100 SW Auburn Rd, Topeka, KS 66615
785-478-3444
www.kve.coop

KAW VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

LightTalk



FROM THE MANAGER

Keeping Your Lights On

On occasion, Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative will plan an outage in your area. Why do we do this?

There are times that our infrastructure needs to be repaired, replaced, or updated. When this is scheduled as a way to keep you and our crews safe, we plan an outage. We do our best to plan around times the will be the least inconvenient to our members, so we often will plan these during regular business hours. We also try to avoid these interruptions during winter or summer months because these are peak times of the year for you, our members.

These outages may sound inconvenient, but they really are a benefit to you. By doing routine and regular system upgrades, this keeps our infrastructure performing at optimal rates and increases reliability. We also look at infrastructure updates as maintaining public safety. If older lines need to be replaced, well, then we replace them – that keeps everyone safe!

You probably don't pay much attention to the infrastructure of our system, like power poles, but it is the backbone of your service. Without strong, sturdy poles reliability can decrease. That's why we take the time to inspect the hundreds of poles found throughout our area. As our linemen are out and about throughout the year they check poles for de-

cay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which poles are the oldest, and which ones need to be replaced through a rotational process. Even though a standard pole is expected to last more than 50 years, the Kansas weather decreases that lifespan.

So, how long does it take to replace poles? Well, that really depends on the type of pole needing to be replaced. We estimate about four hours, but replacing a pole requires a lot of hard work by our linemen.

When we plan outages, we can estimate how long and when you'll be without power so that you can be prepared.

Here at Kaw Valley Electric, we want to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep you safe, and keep our electrical system running efficiently and safely. So, the next time you are alerted to a planned outage in your area, just know it is important to provide you with the quality electric service that our members deserve.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about your service, feel free to contact us at our office in Topeka at 785-478-3444, or email us at info@kve.coop.



Jerry Manning

Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Jerry Manning—General Manager

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Happy Thanksgiving Office Closed Nov. 26-27



Our offices will be closed Nov. 26-27 in observance of the holiday. Kaw Valley Electric wishes you a Happy Thanksgiving.

Why Kaw Valley Electric Plans Outages

Kaw Valley Electric is proud to provide reliable service to our members. Still, despite our efforts to keep the lights on 100 percent of the time, outages do occur. We get questions about outages often, and wanted to take this opportunity to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

What happens when an outage occurs?

Members are encouraged to report an outage to our office by calling 800-794-2011. Every call helps Kaw Valley Electric know how large an area an outage covers, and allows diagnostic protocols to begin. This also starts the process of dispatching a crew to a location to begin repairs to damaged equipment and get the power back on as quickly as possible.

When you make the call to report an outage, it goes to our office in Topeka (1100 SW Auburn Road). If the outage occurs during our normal business hours you will speak to one of our member service representatives. They will ask for

your address and will be put into our outage system. If the outage occurs after business hours, your call will be sent to Mobile Page who serves as our third party call center to handle our after-hours calls. If an outage is significant, Kaw Valley will call in our own employees to assist with taking member calls, or dispatching crews to the reported outages.

Linemen are required to rotate being on call. If an outage occurs after-hours, those who are on call will be contacted by Mobile Page to respond to the outage.

Advance notice is often given for severe weather by weather bureaus. When this happens linemen, and employees may be placed on call in order to better serve our members in the event of a significant outage. In significant outages, scout teams may be assigned to areas to assess damage to any electric infrastructure. The scout team will categorize outages accordingly.

Why are my neighbors lights on, but I'm in the dark?

Your home may be on a different distribution line than your neighbor. In order to handle the load neighborhoods, businesses, towns, and individual residences are powered by different lines, substations, and electric poles.

Why aren't you coming to my residence first? My problem seems like a simple fix.

When Kaw Valley has a large outage we do follow a standard protocol for restoring power quickly and safely. Our first priority in a major outage is emergency

management. Restoring police and fire stations, and hospitals are first on the list.

Medical Emergency Members are members who have been prioritized with the help of a medical professional, like a primary care provider. Kaw Valley is able to flag members who need to be restored as soon as possible due to the need for life support devices.

During an outage, we begin by determining the source. We assess our generation facilities and once the source is identified, we begin repairs. There is a standard protocol for repairing and restoring during an outage. Our infrastructure is the backbone of delivering power. Transmission lines that carry electricity from generation stations are first on the list, followed by:

1. Substations where high-voltage power from a transmission line is reduced for member usage.
2. Distribution lines that carry electricity from substations to each neighborhood, or distribution hubs.
3. Tap lines that serve direct homes and businesses.
4. Individual lines to customers. These are the most difficult and time-consuming in the restoration process.

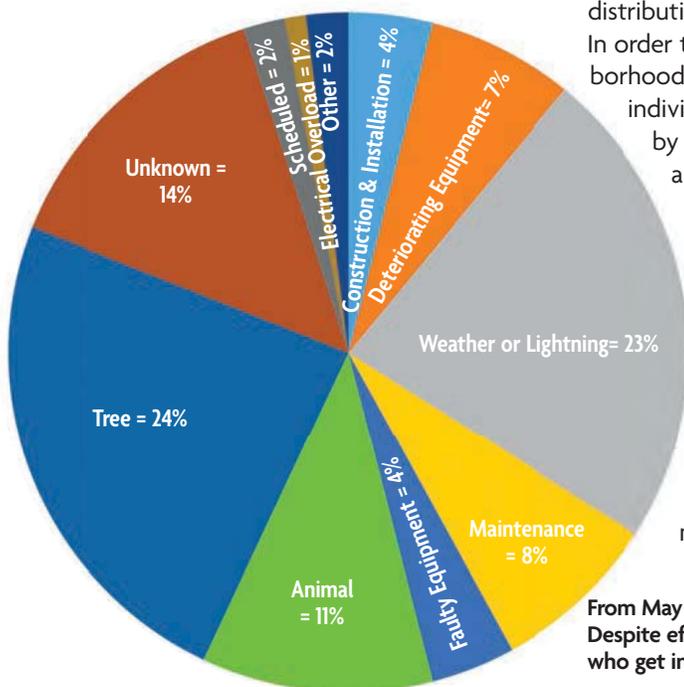
Above all, our crews' safety is our priority. Kaw Valley will keep linemen from proceeding to restore power if a fire is in progress, or a gas leak is present. In addition, severe lightning keeps linemen grounded as well. Once the situation is deemed safe, our crews will then proceed to restore the outage.

What causes an outage?

Despite efforts to prevent outages, some are out of our control. There

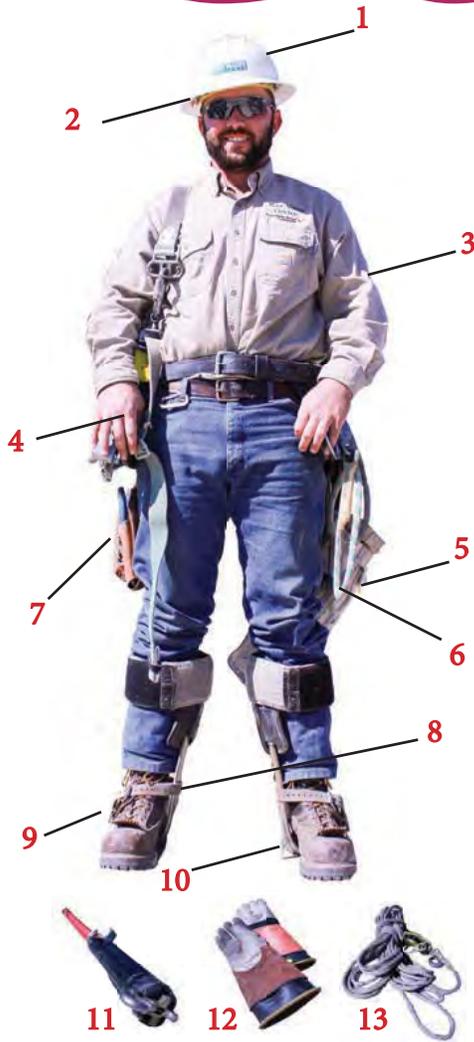
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2015 Outages



From May to August 2015 weather and trees were a significant portion of outage causes. Despite efforts to control animal interference 11 percent of outages are caused by animals who get into the power lines, such as squirrels.

A Lineman's Gear



Pictured: Apprentice Lineman, Brad Heideman

1. **Hard Hat:** The hard hat not only protects against electrical hazards, but protects a lineman's head from falling objects.
2. **Safety Glasses:** Linemen must wear goggles or safety glasses to protect their eyes when working on electrical lines or clearing a right-of-way. These protect them from debris and electrical flashes.
3. **Fire-Resistant Clothing:** While linemen do everything possible to prevent them, unexpected electrical arcs can happen. Fire-resistant (FR) clothing will self-extinguish and reduce injury due to burns.
4. **Equipment Belt:** This is where most tools are stored. It's like a lineman's desk. These belts have loops that allow carrying tools he might need while up on the pole.
5. **Safety Straps:** Once a lineman reaches the top of the pole, they unhook one end of the safety strap from the belt, loop the strap around the pole and rehook it to the D-ring on the other side of the belt. This is called "safetied off" and they can now safely work with both hands free. New safety regulations require linemen to also engage a new-style safety strap around the pole the entire time they are working or climbing to prevent falls.
6. **Ditty Bag:** This is a canvas bag that hangs from the belt and holds smaller items such as nuts and bolts.
7. **Tool Pouch:** This hangs from the side of the belt and carries tools needed while working at the top of the pole.
8. **Climbers/Hooks:** Leg shafts made of steel or aluminum hold gaffs in place next to a lineman's boots. Climbers are strapped on just below the knee and also around the boot to hold them in place.
9. **Boots:** The raised heel on these boots help keep the climber positioned correctly when climbing, and a steel shank built into the sole gives support while climbing.
10. **Gaffs:** The razor sharp steel points hooked to the climbers dig into the wood helping linemen climb safely and efficiently.
11. **Hot Stick:** This stick is made from insulated, high voltage resistant fiberglass, and is used to attach and remove hot lines.
12. **Insulated/Rubber Gloves:** Rubber gloves provide protection against shock and burn injuries. These are tested every 30 to 90 days to withstand 17,000 volts. They are worn inside leather glove protectors or gauntlets that protect the rubber against cuts, abrasions, and punctures.
13. **Handline:** This rope also contains a pulley block. The rope is hung on the pole and is strong enough for any job. It also is not a conductor of electricity, making it a safe tool to use.

Have you ever wondered what kind of gear a lineman wears to do his job? This gear can be quite heavy, and can weigh up to 50 pounds. It may not be comfortable all of the time, especially in inclement weather, but it all serves a purpose. It keeps them safe, and your lights on.

Kaw Valley Collects Donations for Rossville Food Pantry

During the Community Food Drive, Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative collected 100 pounds of food and more than \$100 cash donations for the Rossville Food Pantry.

"Our Community Food Drive was able to provide for the Rossville Food Pantry at a time when donations are needed," said Sarah Farlee, Kaw Valley Electric marketing and public relations specialist. "Our members, and employees were able to provide not only food items, but a monetary donation that will help many in need."

Kaw Valley matched the cash donations collected from members bringing the total donated to \$220.

The Rossville Food Pantry is located at the Rossville United Methodist Church. Regular distribution hours are from 9-11 a.m. on the Saturday following the second Monday of the month.



Alliance Question of the Month

Is there an update on the cost savings a consolidation will bring?

Our 10-year projection is actually better than we originally forecasted! We initially projected a \$13 million savings over a 10 year period. However, as we entered the alliance and began to look at a consolidation of services, efficiencies gained, and the purchasing power we have, the consolidation will provide a savings of \$17 million to members over the next 10 years.

Do you have a question you'd like us to address regarding the alliance? Feel free to submit your question to info@kve.coop.

FUN FIVE

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Kasey Whitaker

Operations Assistant
6.5 years at Kaw Valley



Kasey Whitaker

my family.

Q. What is one thing most people don't know about you?

A. I enjoy hunting and fishing.

Q. Do you collect anything?

A. No

Q. What is the best part of your job?

A. I enjoy working in the Line Department and getting to see the more technical side of things. I get to see the new construction from beginning to end, as well as maintenance of our existing line.

Q. If you could have a super power, what would it be?

A. To be able to be in more than one place at a time.

Q. What is your favorite thing to do on a Sunday?

A. Spend time with

Why Kaw Valley Plans Outages Continued from page 16-B

are common reasons why they do occur. The pie chart shows that the majority of our outages occur due to weather-related events like thunderstorms, ice storms, heavy wind, lightning, and natural disasters (tornadoes or flooding), but there are a few other causes.

Animals and trees making contact with wires can cause an outage. To limit this, we trim trees away from distribution lines and install animal guards on pole-top transformers. We use squirrel guards, raptor protectors, and use other construction methods to keep animals out of harm's way, and to keep them from causing an outage.

Other events like digging, construction or automobile accidents can cause damage to power poles or lines. In rural areas, like our service area, farm related accidents can also cause outages. That is why it is so important to be aware of your surroundings while working on the farm. It not only ensures your own safety, but can limit damage causing accidents.

Equipment failure can also be a reason for an outage. In rare cases, transformers and other equipment may fail during normal operations. Or, an overload may also cause equipment to fail. We typically see these problems on extremely hot, or high peak days, during the months of May through September.

Power supplier failure can cause outages on the Kaw Valley line, as well. As a distribution cooperative we are reliant on Westar Energy. If Westar is experiencing major outages those outages may affect our system.

On average it takes about 45 minutes to repair a transformer, and an average of four hours to replace power poles depending on the type of pole. Smaller single phase poles take less time to repair than larger three phase poles.

Outages may vary depending on the season, and can last a few sec-

onds or minutes, to hours. Power can also be out for days when the situation is severe. Our crews are often out in dangerous weather conditions to restore power to your home and/or business as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible.

What does Kaw Valley Electric do to prevent outages?

While we cannot control weather, we can work to limit power outages by maintaining our equipment.

Planned outages are a part of upgrading and repairing equipment safely. Planned outages are used to limit longer, unplanned outages later. We will notify you before a planned outage and make every effort to limit negative impacts.

Tree trimming is one maintenance practice we can do to help limit tree damage. Kaw Valley has third party trimming crews that will be assigned to downed trees and limbs to clear an area for linemen to begin working.

Investing in new equipment and technology is also a way to maintain infrastructure by replacing aging equipment, installing upgrades for efficiency, and building infrastructure that keeps up with the increasing demand for power. Investing in the new Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System is one way we work to diagnose outages faster, as well as inform members on how their power consumption can be altered to save money.

At Kaw Valley, preparing for the worst is what we do. We train our employees continuously in order to provide the safest, most efficient service to our members. Our member service representatives are trained to quickly respond to your calls, and our crews are trained to react, and repair as quickly as possible. We also have backups built into our infrastructure, and we also keep stocks of materials on hand so we are ready whenever a replacement is needed.