



**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Outlet

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Steve Foss
Chief Executive Officer

Christopher Parr
Assistant General Manager

Randy Richards
Assistant General Manager

District Offices

East District
P.O. Box 70
McLouth, KS 66054-0070

West District
1100 SW Auburn Rd
Topeka, KS 66615

East & West District Office Hours:
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tip of the Month

Here's a cool tip for your fridge: Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in your refrigerator. Uncovered foods release moisture, causing the compressor to work harder.

FROM THE CEO

Beating the Summer Time Peak

July means the heart of the summer, and with that comes the Kansas heat and the need to stay cool by running the air conditioner during those sweltering days. It's hard to think about cutting back on energy use when temperatures reach three digits, but in fact, that is the best time to consider saving electricity—even if it is just a little bit.

By saving or conserving energy, you're helping everyone on FreeState Electric Cooperative lines save money, and that's cause for a celebration—fireworks included.

A few degrees on your thermostat could be tangible savings for you. Being conscious of the peak times from 3 to 6 p.m. each day and saving those household chores until later in the evening, or even earlier in the morning, may help you save energy for your home and the entire cooperative. If all members do their part, the cooperative purchases less electricity during the most expensive times of the day—and that results in real savings for everyone.

Summer isn't the only time to conserve energy. You can look at mechanical changes in your home like older HVAC units or less efficient appliances. Those may be pricey options, but one inexpensive way to increase efficiency without buying new items is looking at your windows. You don't need brand new windows. Improve the seal by caulking doors, windows, and any other openings where cold air could escape. There's also the switch to LED lightbulbs, and you would be surprised at the noticeable difference just one lightbulb can make.

Another way to increase your efficiency is through actual usage. The thermostat is a great starting point. There are smart options you can invest in that include apps and technology, or just set the thermostat higher when you are gone or program it to match your schedule. There are also the simpler things you can do. Wash clothes in cold water, run the dishwasher when you go to bed, keep lights turned off when you aren't in a room, or take the family outside instead of sitting in front of the television.

If you have questions about how you can save or start conserving energy, contact our energy use coordinator. No matter what steps you take, small ones, larger ones, it doesn't matter. At FreeState we want to help you save money and find ways to make you as efficient as possible.

If you have questions or comments about this material, we encourage you to contact us at 800-794-1989 or customerservice@freestate.coop.



Steve Foss

“Summer isn't the only time to conserve energy. You can look at mechanical changes in your home like older HVAC units or less efficient appliances.”

WE ARE F MEMBER



As a member-owner of FreeState Electric Cooperative, your knowledge and engagement with our co-op is our main priority. With this goal, we strive to help you better understand the services available to you while getting to know those who are continuously working to provide you with safe, reliable, and efficient power. It is for this reason FreeState chose to develop a year-long series focusing on each of our departments and the employees in them. This series is set to be published monthly in The Outlet, social media accounts, and on our website where a gallery and video will be showcased as well. It is our hope this series will help our members relate to our employees with a better understanding of a day in their life.

There are many ways to contact FreeState as a member, and chances are you will be greeted by someone in our Member Relations Department. Our Member Relations Department is the first point of contact for our members with questions ranging from billing, new services, member benefits, outage reporting, communication materials, and more.

Whether using social media, email, or phone, our member relations team is dedicated to providing our members with quality service.

“The Member Relations Department is the first point of contact for members,” said **JENNIFER PING**, member relations manager. “Our department consists of the call center, member billing and payment processing, member communications, capital credits and service orders, and any other questions a member may want addressed.”

To ensure our members receive quality ser-

vice, the Member Relations Department includes sub departments, each staffed with experts in their related field—accounts and billing, service representatives, communications, and service order requests.

“Our primary goal is to make sure that communication, whether on the phone, face-to-face in the office, in print, or on social media, is informative and beneficial to the member,” Ping said. “To do that effectively and efficiently, we have employees in our department who specialize in one facet of our member relations, yet remain knowledgeable on the other facets as well.”

Member Relations

Our Member Relations representatives are located in our Topeka office and are primarily responsible for answering phone calls and assisting members with questions or concerns they may have.

REESTATE RELATIONS

“My primary responsibilities in this position include monitoring customer service emails, assisting members, processing new member applications and processing payments,” said **KELSEY SCHMIDT**, member services representative. “In my department, we are the face of the co-op, so it is important we are providing the best service to our FreeState members.”

While our member relations representatives are primarily those who answer phone calls and address any questions or concerns, their roles often overlap with the department’s account representatives as teamwork is critical to provide assistance to our members. To keep the workflow running smoothly, a supervisor is located at each office to help the member relations manager oversee the department.

“In my position, I ensure all information needed to perform our jobs effectively is communicated to the department,” said **COREY CALVERT**, member relations supervisor. “It takes collaboration between all departments to make FreeState successful, and our work is essential to that goal.”

We are led by our members and we want to serve them to the best of our ability in all aspects.

JENNIFER PING
MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER

Member Accounts

The member account representatives of the department handle member accounts and the billing process, and are located at our McLouth location. Although answering phone calls from members remains a priority, their main goal is to ensure accurate billing occurs each month and all questions regarding accounts and bills are addressed.

“My position is vital to ensuring great relations with our members as our members expect their billing to be accurate and easy to monitor,” said **TRACI DEPRIEST**, member account supervisor. “Many of our members use the SmartHub ebilling system to monitor their usage to help keep bills low, so it is important our meters are functioning properly to provide members with reliable information.”

During billing cycles and payment due dates, our account representatives strive to provide prompt service.

“A large portion of my day is dedicated to processing payments and applying funds to member accounts,” said **MELANIE EICHMAN**. “This includes payments made online, through mail, credit cards,

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We Are FreeState

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or drafted directly from bank accounts. I also monitor our meters daily to ensure accurate readings are posted to accounts.”

In addition to assisting members with their accounts and billing, our member account coordinators ensure the process of requesting services is smooth and efficient.

“My position is important to our members because it is my job to understand what the member needs while gathering enough information for the engineering and line departments to complete the service order request,” said **AMANDA HOLLOWAY**, member account coordinator. “This includes taking phone calls from members and contractors, gathering necessary paperwork, invoicing, and communicating to the necessary departments.”

Member Communications

In terms of letters you may receive with your monthly bills, the monthly magazine content, and FreeState’s social media accounts, our communications staff work diligently to provide information to our membership on concerns, changes, or updates that may affect members and the cooperative.

“Our primary goal as FreeState’s communicators is to provide our membership with information regarding changes taking place, clarifying cooperative programs and services, and answering any concerns or questions asked through social media,” said **WHITNEY TUREK**, communications specialist. “We help communicate the information various FreeState departments want to share with our members.”

Turek works closely with FreeState’s public relations and marketing specialist, **SARAH FARLEE**, to keep the members informed of FreeState business and the benefits available to them.

“Our main goal is finding new ways to create strategies that will help our members understand why the coopera-

tive difference matters,” Farlee said. “We want them to understand why being a member is a benefit, and to do that, we want to ensure we let our members know what exactly is going on and how they are being impacted by decisions made in the board room.”

FreeState’s priority is to ensure members feel connected with our co-op, and our Member Relations Department is the first point of contact to do that.

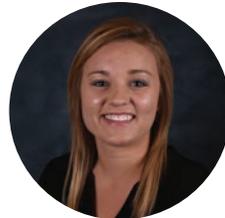
“We know our members’ time is valuable, so we are always looking into new technology and programs to allow our members ways to get information, track electric usage, and make payments,” said Ping. “We are led by our members and we want to serve them to the best of our ability.”

To learn more about our Member Relations Department, www.freestate.coop/wearefec or call 800-794-1989.

Your Member Relations Department



Jennifer Ping
Member Relations Manager



Lindsey West
Member Relations Representative



Traci Depriest
Member Accounts Supervisor



Sarah Farlee
PR/Marketing Specialist



Kasey Whitaker
Member Account Coordinator



Corey Calvert
Member Relations Supervisor



Kelsey Schmidt
Member Relations Representative



Whitney Turek
Communications Specialist



Melanie Eichman
Member Account Representative



Amanda Holloway
Member Account Coordinator

May Usage Drastically Increased

This year's Kansas weather has been typical, but only because it's constantly unpredictable. Electric bills may be high, and members could receive a May bill that looks like mid-summer and it all stems from our cooling degree days.

Our May 2018 cooling degree days topped 309, which is a significant increase from May 2017 at 92, May 2016 at 74, and May 2015 at 77. This increase might be a little shocking when you get your monthly bill as the cooling load for May 2018 is 236 percent higher than May 2017.

What Are Degree Days?

Degree days are based on the assumption that when the outside temperature is 65°F, we don't need heating or cooling. Degree days are the difference between the daily temperature mean and 65°F. If the temperature mean is above 65°F, we subtract 65 from the mean and the result is cooling degree days. If the mean is below 65°F, we subtract the mean from 65 and the result is heating degree days.

How Do we use Degree Days?

The most common use of degree days is for tracking energy use. Without degree days, comparing the energy

used over two periods would be similar to calculating the miles per gallon rating for your car without knowing how far you had driven. If you wanted to know if the attic insulation you added over the summer was saving energy, you would use your energy bills to determine how much "fuel" was used before and after the retrofit.

Then, using the degree days, you could determine "how far you went" during those periods. Instead of calculating miles per gallon, you would determine kWh's or therms of natural gas per degree day.

When comparing energy use, you should also consider other energy uses that are not impacted by weather such as lights, and appliances. You can estimate the energy used for these purposes by examining the energy used during typical temperate months when little heating or cooling energy is used.

The energy used during these periods reflects your base monthly consumption. Subtracting the base use from total consumption during a winter month will yield an estimate of energy used for heating.

If you have energy usage questions, feel free to contact FreeState's Energy Use Coordinator, Matt Lambert, at mattthew.lambert@freestate.coop.

Retiring Capital Credits

This year, FreeState Electric Cooperative's board of trustees approved the retirement of \$750,000. The East District will be receiving credits from years 1984, 1985, 1986, and part of 1987. The West District will be receiving credits from part of 1992. The credits will be applied to the June's usage bill.

To further explain this retirement and the what this means for you as a member, it is important to understand that a member-owned co-op does not technically earn profits. Any revenues above the cost of business are considered margins.

These margins represent an interest-free loan of operating capital by the membership to the co-op. This capital allows FreeState to finance operations with the intent that this capital will be repaid to you in later years, either through allocation or retirement. What's the difference?

An allocation determines each member's share of the co-op's margin for a given year. Margins are what is left after expenses are paid.

Margins are allocated, or assigned, to members who purchased electricity from FreeState during the year in which the margin was generated in proportion to the electrical sales for that year.

Each member's allocation is determined by kilowatt-hour consumption for that year. The co-op keeps a permanent record of each capital credit account, which is where the allocated amount remains until it is paid, or "retired."

After reviewing the financial health of the co-op, the board may declare a retirement of capital credits, at which time all or part of each member's allocated amount is paid.

How are Capital Credits Retired?

FreeState's board determined the method for returning capital credits is a hybrid method called Last-in-First-Out/First-in-First-Out, or LIFO-FIFO. This method manages equity by retiring a combination of the oldest and newest years and provides value to new and long-time members.

Special Retirements

Special retirements are specific events that occur and paid at a discounted rate. Discounting special retirements reflects the time value of money and provides a fair way to recognize special circumstances while treating members equitably. The board reviews and approves the rate annually. Special retirements are used when current members are leaving the system, a death of one member of a joint account, or selling estates.

All of us at FreeState wish
you a safe and happy

4th of
July.



Meadows Retires After 12 Years

Gratny reappointed to serve the remainder of the term



Larry Meadows proudly served on FreeState's Board of Trustees for 12 years and was an active member in the FreeState community.

After 12 year's of dedicated service as a trustee for FreeState Electric Cooperative, **LARRY MEADOWS**, Tonganoxie, retired from his position on May 22, 2018.

MARK GRATNY, Leavenworth, has been reappointed to the FreeState Board of Trustees after Meadows announced his retirement and will serve the remaining 10 months of the term.

Gratny previously served 15 years on the board and has been a cooperative member for 42 years. Meadows served on the board for 12 years and has been a FreeState member for 24 years.

"We are sad to see Larry (Meadows) retire and we wish him well," said Jeanine Murphy, board president. "He has been a strong voice for members in Leavenworth County and he has served FreeState well."

Meadows began serving on the Board on Sept. 13, 2006, and has remained an active trustee by attending Co-ops Vote events, our annual health fair, and more. Continuing Meadow's legacy in community and cooperative involvement is Gratny, who has previous experience and knowledge of the position and FreeState's goals.

"The board is fortunate to have such a qualified replacement ready to step up and serve the rest of Larry's term," Murphy said. "Mark is well versed, and the transition will be a seamless one."

Gratny is involved with the Kansas Quarter Horse Association and the Kansas Racing Horse Association, serving as a past president for both organizations. He is also involved with the Kansas Horse Council and is a Kansas State University Stakeholder.

Being involved in the decisions that makes the cooperative a better company is something Gratny has enjoyed while serving the members of FreeState. He finds the best way to educate members is to have a conversation, whether it be by phone, email, or face-to-face.

All of us here at FreeState wish Meadows the best and thank him for his 12 years of dedicated service to our cooperative. Gratny, an NRECA Gold Certified Trustee, reassumed trustee duties on May 23, 2018.

If you have questions regarding this transition, contact us at 800-794-5767 or visit www.freestate.coop.



Larry Meadows (right) meets with state representatives during a Co-ops Vote event to encourage more co-op members to vote.



Mark Gratny (left) with Larry Meadows (right) at the Board Appreciation banquet. Gratny will serve out the remainder of Meadow's term.

FreeState Welcomes the 2018 Youth Tour

Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegates visit FreeState on June 8, 2018

FreeState Electric Cooperative was proud to host 35 Kansas youth and four Hawaii youth for the 58th Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour on June 8, 2018. While FreeState participates in the program by sponsoring two local youth whose parents are FreeState members, we take it one step further by hosting the group each year at our Topeka office.

While visiting FreeState, delegates enjoy a breakfast by Simply Sarah's Catering followed by an electrical safety demonstration, bucket truck rides with FreeState linemen, and one-on-one meet and greets with FreeState staff from various departments to discuss career opportunities in the cooperative industry based on each youth's personal interest.

"FreeState is proud to have the opportunity to teach youth about electrical safety and career options available to them," said **RANDY RICHARDS**, assistant general manager. "It helps give them a basic understanding of safety and their cooperatives who have sponsored them on this trip."

After learning about their co-ops, delegates traveled to Washington, D.C., to join more than 1,800 high school students from across the country. Delegates met with state representatives, toured memorials and the White House, and explored various landmarks.

This year, FreeState sponsored **BRAXTON SCHUPE** and **ADAM DEMARANVILLE** from Tonganoxie High School after an application process.



Youth Tour delegates get a bird's-eye view with the help of FreeState's linemen.



Delegates speak with various FreeState departments to discuss career opportunities.



Hawaii Youth Tour delegate, Sara, performs a hula dance trying on our linemen gear.



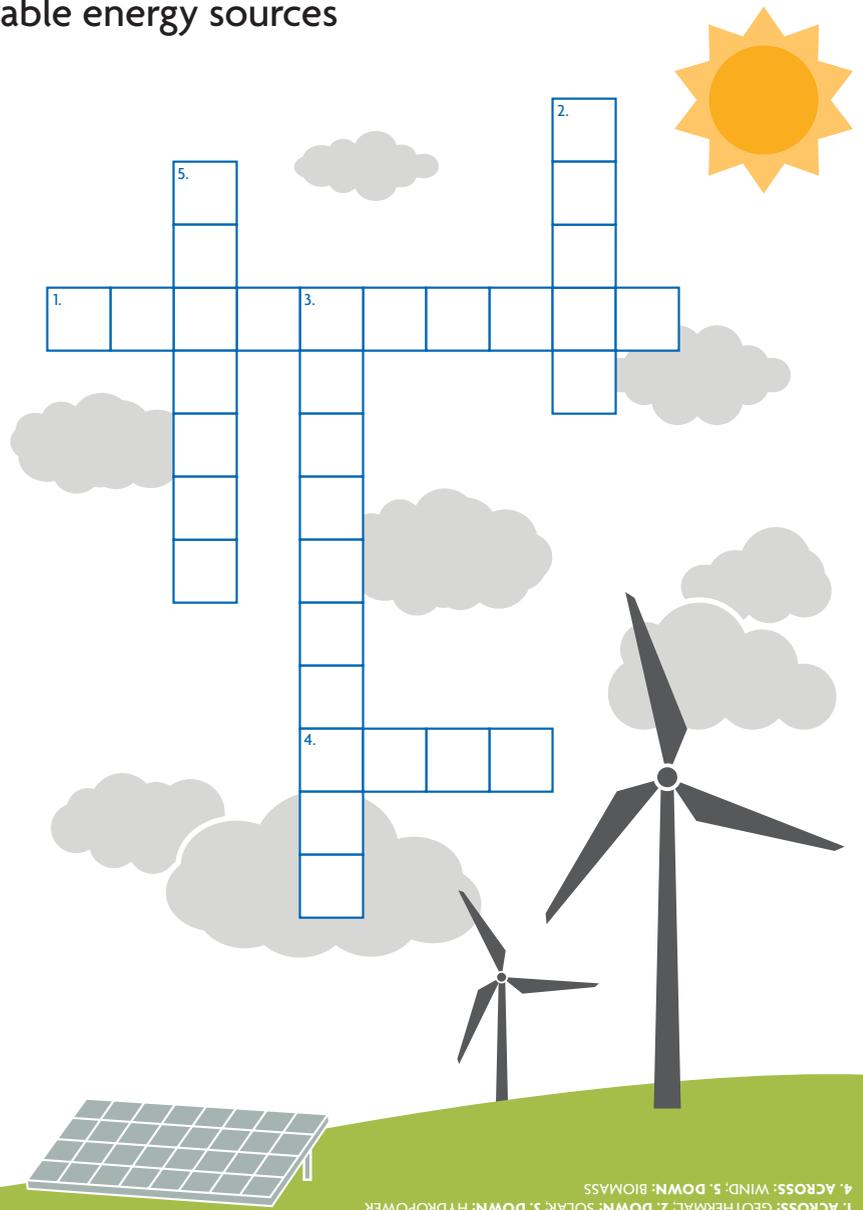
Engineering Operations Technician Mark Raines gives a safety demonstration.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES CROSSWORD



Did you know the electricity you use in your home is generated using a variety of fuel sources? Some energy sources are nonrenewable (like coal and natural gas) and some are renewable (like solar and wind energy). Learn about renewable energy sources and complete the puzzle below.

1. **ACROSS:** _____ energy uses heat from the earth. People can use the heat to warm buildings or to generate electricity.
2. **DOWN:** _____ energy is produced through panels that convert sunlight into electricity.
3. **DOWN:** _____ is energy produced from moving water. The power plant is typically located on or near a water source.
4. **ACROSS:** _____ energy uses tall turbines with blades to collect kinetic energy.
5. **DOWN:** _____ is organic material that comes from plants and animals; it contains stored energy from the sun and when burned, uses chemical energy that is released as heat.



ANSWER KEY:
 1. ACROSS: GEOTHERMAL; 2. DOWN: SOLAR; 3. DOWN: HYDROPOWER
 4. ACROSS: WIND; 5. DOWN: BIOMASS