

800-794-1989
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**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Outlet

FreeState Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Board of Trustees

Larry Butel
Overbrook

Don Montgomery
Burlingame

Bill Conley
Delia

Jeanine Murphy
Leavenworth

Rob Sage
Maple Hill

Ralph Phillips
Mayetta

Matthew Turecek
Valley Falls

Mark Wulfschuh
Berryton

Harlan Hunt
Meriden

Staff

Steve Foss
Chief Executive Officer

Christopher Parr
Assistant General Manager

District Offices

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

Topeka Office
1100 SW Auburn Rd.
Topeka, KS 66615

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Member Notice

FreeState Electric Cooperative experienced low sales due to mild weather and has entered into a revenue requirement study. This study will provide the board of trustees a road map for future revenue and the financial requirements of the cooperative.

Annual Meeting Canceled Amid Health Concerns

FreeState Electric Cooperative's board of trustees has made the decision to cancel the cooperative's annual meeting scheduled for April 21 in Perry. Trustee elections will be determined by mail-in ballots beginning April 1 and ending April 17.

"Our concern for our community extends to the overall health and welfare of our members," said Steve Foss, CEO. "With growing concerns over spreading COVID-19 we have made the difficult decision to cancel the annual meeting and we'll keep everyone updated on future plans."

"The ballots cast by mail will be used to determine the trustees," added Foss. "Every member will get a ballot and detailed instructions are included on the ballot. We ask that members

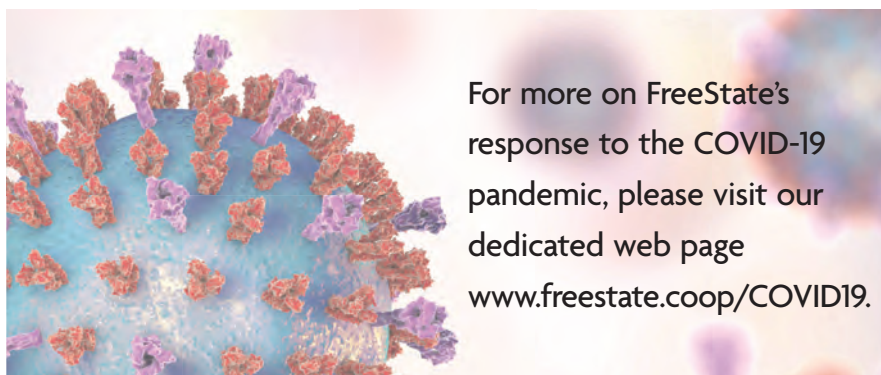
take a moment to vote and drop that envelope back into the mail by April 17."

Foss urges members to mail the ballots back in the provided envelope so they are counted.

"Each member will get a ballot and a return envelope that is pre-addressed and prepaid. Please do not send them to the co-op in a different envelope. Do not include them with your monthly payment, and do not bring them to the office," said Foss.

The Centers for Disease Control's "All of Community" approach to slowing the transmission of COVID-19 includes minimizing social contact. With that in mind, FreeState's board of directors and management have decided that canceling the annual gathering of

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For more on FreeState's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit our dedicated web page www.freestate.coop/COVID19.

PHOTO SOURCE CANVA

2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Voting Information

Trustee Candidate Profiles and Voting by Mail Starting April 2

Due to the cancellation of the annual meeting amid the COVID-19 pandemic, FreeState will select trustees via mail-in ballot only. The ballot mailed to your home will be your only chance to vote for your cooperative representation. Please follow the instructions provided on your ballot to cast your vote and return it by April 17 to make certain your vote is cast. We will announce the winners of the vote in the June issue of the magazine, on the FreeState website and on the co-op's social media platforms.

At-Large Trustee Election

On Feb. 4, 2020, members of the FreeState nominating committee, appointed by the board of trustees, met to present candidates for election to the FreeState board. The candidates listed are to be presented to the membership for consideration.

Four board members will be elected. FreeState members will vote by an at-large system. Members can vote for any of the nominees in any district.

The 2020 trustee positions up for election are as follows:

East District Trustees

- ▶ **RUSSELL FRENCH**
- ▶ **MICHAEL MCNARY**
- ▶ **JEANINE MURPHY** (incumbent)
- ▶ **RALPH PHILLIPS** (incumbent)

West District Trustees

- ▶ **LARRY BUTEL** (incumbent)
- ▶ **CAROL MARPLE**
- ▶ **DON MONTGOMERY** (incumbent)
- ▶ **DENNIS REED**
- ▶ **NATE REWERTS**
- ▶ **TOM SLOAN**

The two candidates with the most votes in each district will be elected to the board of trustees. The second position in the East District will be a two-year term. This will then put the board on a three-year, three trustee voting rotation due to the odd number of trustees.

FreeState is governed by the policies set by our board, all of whom are FreeState cooperative consumer-members. Our board provides a vital connection with our membership and the community at large.

How can I vote?

Due to the cancellation of the annual meeting, members will need to vote using the ballot sent via the United States Postal Service.

Each FreeState member gets only one vote. Instructions on how to vote are on the ballot mailed to members. Use the provided envelope to mail in your ballot by April 17 to make certain it is cast on time.

Do not mail the ballot to the cooperative. Do not place the ballot in your monthly payment. Please use the provided envelope.

Vote by Mail

Ballots will be mailed beginning April 2, 2020, and will need to be returned by April 17, 2020, to ensure they are counted. It is easy to vote by mail. Simply complete the ballot using the instructions listed and return as directed in the postage-paid envelope provided. Please return the ballot using the postage-paid envelope. Do not bring ballots to the office.

Who do I vote for?

Candidate biographical information is printed on the following pages and it will also be included with mailed ballots. The information printed has been provided by the candidates. For more information about the meeting please visit our website **WWW.FREESTATE.COOP/ANNUALMEETING** or email us at **CUSTOMERSERVICE@FREESTATE.COOP**.

THE ANNUAL REPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE DIGITALLY ON THE FREESTATE WEBSITE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A HARD COPY, PLEASE CONTACT THE COOPERATIVE AND ONE WILL BE SENT TO YOU.

2020 Trustee Election: Candidate Profiles

East District

RUSSELL FRENCH

Lawrence

Russell French, Lawrence, has been a cooperative member for 22 years,



Russell French

and is a semi-retired owner of R&R Communications, Inc., providing structured voice and data cable plant designs for commercial entities.

"I believe my customer service experience and relationships with employees, vendors and subcontractors, would be a beneficial experience to me as a trustee," French said.

French served in the United States Air Force from 1968 to 1997 and has extensive training in electronics and computer equipment with a diverse background in customer service, product support, planning, consulting and project management. In 2000, French founded R&R Communications, Inc. in Lawrence. French says he learned a great deal about personnel, compliance with policies and regulations, governance, and managing a successful business.

East District

MICHAEL McNARY

Meriden

Michael McNary has been a FreeState member for 21 years



Michael McNary

and a Farmers Insurance Agent for the past 23 years.

As a business professional and former employee of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (1990 to 1997), McNary understands the importance of safe and reliable electric service to rural areas and communities.

McNary wants to help the cooperative in its continued efforts to improve technology and education and says that being available to all members to listen and work together is crucial to solving problems and addressing challenges.

"By working together, the cooperative will be stronger and continue to be successful for years to come," said McNary.

He is a past Meriden City Council member and now serves as the chairperson for the Meadowlark Extension District of Jefferson, Jackson, and Nemaha counties. He also serves on the 4-H Program Development Council.

McNary is vice president of Vawter, Vauter, and Vaughter Family Association, and is a member of Knights of Columbus at St. Aloysius Catholic Church assisting with fundraising and community activities.

East District

JEANINE MURPHY

Leavenworth (I)

Jeanine Murphy has been a lifetime co-op member.



Jeanine Murphy

She has served on the board for 13 years, serving as the board president for five years.

She currently serves as the director of curriculum for USD No. 449.

She has completed the course to become Director Gold Certified by the National Rural Electric Co-op Association, has completed education requirements for Credentialed Co-op Director and also has completed the National Rural Electric Co-op Association's Board Leadership Certification.

Murphy lives in rural Leavenworth and has one son and four grandchildren. She says she is very proud of the youth program that FreeState offers because she believes it will pay dividends in the future to help educate our youngest members.

"As a trustee, I am representing my family, my neighbors, and my community to make certain affordable, safe, and reliable electricity is available," said Murphy. "Equally important to me is FreeState's concern for community. As a trustee, I am very proud of what we have done to promote rural Kansas, and the organizations that serve the area. I would like to continue to support FreeState's efforts in these areas as a trustee."

East District

RALPH PHILLIPS

Mayetta (I)

Ralph Phillips has been a co-op member for 46



Ralph Phillips

years; 34 of those he has also served as a co-op trustee. He owns and operates Phillips Dairy.

Phillips has served on numerous boards including Mid-Am Dairy Co-op, the Dairy Farmers of America area council and the Jackson County Farm Bureau board. He has also served as the president of the Kansas Electrical Co-op Board.

During his service on the board, Phillips has witnessed many changes. He enjoys working with the other board members to make decisions that benefit the member-owners of the co-op and continues to make FreeState one of the most progressive boards in the state.

He and his wife, Phyllis, live in rural Mayetta. They are parents to five children who have blessed them with 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

"Right now, I am very excited about the future of the electric industry and co-ops as a whole," said Phillips. "In my time of serving, we continually take strides to make sure each member is provided with the product they need with the service they have come to expect. I have always felt that our board has put members as the priority and will continue to do just that."

2020 Trustee Election: Candidate Profiles

West District

LARRY BUTEL

Overbrook (I)

Larry Butel, Overbrook, has been a member since 1989, and has served on the board since 2004, serving as treasurer for



Larry Butel

several years. Butel is a farmer and rancher, raising cattle, row crops, wheat and hay under Butel Farm, Inc.

He believes being available to answer questions and provide information to members is one of the most important responsibilities of a trustee.

"I value the cooperative business model and want to continue to serve our members, helping to manage the co-op for their best interest," said Butel.

Butel is a member of the Overbrook Rotary Club, coordinator for Cornerstone Family Schools Track and Field, graduate of Osage County Leadership, and a Sunday school teacher for Overbrook and Worden United Methodist Church.

He has served in leadership roles for the Kansas State Bank of Overbrook Board, Cornerstone Family Schools, the Watershed Joint #35, Gideons Int'l, Farmer's Cooperative Association, Farm Service Agency, Extension Council, Overbrook United Methodist Church, Osage County Livestock Association, Wilshire Investment Club, and the Kansas Livestock Association.

West District

CAROL MARPLE

Wakarusa

Carol Marple, Wakarusa, has been a member for 45 years. Marple is a retired rural mail carrier. She is also a partner in the family



Carol Marple

farming operation and has been since 1975. She is a member of the FreeState Operation Round-Up member committee, a member of the Auburn Housing Authority, affordable housing for senior citizens, and a past member of Shawnee Start-ups, and the Shawnee County Farm Service Agency board. She has also served on several boards within Shawnee County Extension, including the executive board. Marple says engagement is a must as a trustee, and she is well networked in the area with current co-op members.

"There is no better way to gain and share information than by meeting people face to face," said Marple.

West District

DON MONTGOMERY

Burlingame (I)

Don Montgomery, Burlingame, has been a cooperative member for 30 years. He has served on the FreeState board as secretary the past three years.



Don Montgomery

Montgomery is a retired vocational agriculture teacher and is currently a farmer and rancher.

Montgomery has seen many changes in the cooperative, and believes we are better and stronger than ever before. His goal is to represent all members and will continue making himself available to members when any questions arise.

"To educate members first, you need to have the information to answer the questions," said Montgomery. "Attending board meetings, strategic planning sessions, and director education classes or industry meetings has allowed me to acquire the knowledge to be a source of information. My priority is the cooperative members."

Montgomery serves on the Southeast Kansas State Farm Management Association Board and the Burlingame Cemetery Board. In the past, he has served on the Kansas State Extension State Advisory Board and was president of the Osage County Extension Board. He is currently a Credentialed Cooperative Director, holding Director Gold Certification, and Board Leadership Credentials.

West District

DENNIS REED

Topeka

Dennis Reed, Topeka, has been a cooperative member for one year. As a consultant for his own business, Midwest Regulatory Consulting, LLC, for the past four years, Reed helps utilities work with transmission issues.



Dennis Reed

Prior to starting his own consulting group, Reed retired from Westar Energy after 41 years of service working with overhead line design and standards in engineering, rates, load research, transmission operations, and for the last 15 years regulatory services and transmission tariff issues. During the last 10 years of employment, he chaired the Regional Tariff Working Group at the Southwest Power Pool.

"I feel that I can provide a perspective related to regional issues, renewables, and the changing wholesale energy industry supply," said Reed.

Reed said that a combination of in-person contacts with members, as well as being available via email are important responsibilities of board members.

For the past four years, Reed has served on the board of directors for DeMolay International, and he has also been involved in the Topeka Lodge #17 of Masonry, Order of Eastern Star, DeMolay International, and the Southwest Power Pool.

West District

NATHAN REWERTS

Topeka

Nathan Rewerts, Topeka, has been a cooperative member for 19 years.

As an investment adviser, Rewerts understands the importance of planning and taking a strategic approach to investing for financial security.

Rewerts serves as the assistant fire chief of the Shawnee County Fire Department District No. 4 and is the secretary/treasurer of Consolidated Rural Water District No. 1.

"I am often called upon to answer questions and educate members of both of the entities I currently serve," said Rewerts. "I believe that members need brief and concise answers to their questions or concerns. Being engaged in my cooperative would help me serve and educate my neighbors and other members."

Rewerts also is a K9 handler on Kansas Task Force K9 and is also the planning team manager and task force leader on Kansas Task Force 2.



Nathan Rewerts

West District

TOM SLOAN

Lawrence

Tom Sloan, Lawrence, has been a member for 38 years.

He is a retired farmer, owning a registered Columbia sheep flock and growing hay, corn and beans. Sloan served in the Kansas Legislature for 24 years before retiring in 2019.

During Sloan's legislative term he focused on energy, telecom and water policies. Sloan chaired and served on relevant Kansas committees, hosting chairpersons and members of Federal agencies.

"FreeState is well managed and I want my knowledge and experience to help guide the organization," said Sloan.

Sloan says as a former legislator he has experience communicating with constituents and would continue to provide open communication with members.

Sloan has served the Douglas County Rural Water District No. 1 for 35 years. He has also served the National Suffolk Sheep Association, Department of Energy Electricity Advisory Committee, Federal Communication Commission Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, the EPA Local Government Advisory Committee, and Lawrence Memorial Hospital.

"Serving on federal agency advisory committees, I brought information back to Kansas stakeholders and conveyed ideas from Kansans," Sloan said.



Tom Sloan

2020 YOUTH PROGRAMS

Students Selected

Four Selected to Represent FreeState this Summer

FreeState Electric Cooperative is sponsoring four local high school students to participate in the 2020 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

Winners were selected based on their application and essay on the topic of cooperative engagement among the next generation of members.

“Students are scored in three areas,” said Sarah Farlee, FreeState’s youth program coordinator. “We look at their student profile (much like a resume), an essay, and an in-person interview at the co-op.”

“Schools in our area should be proud of the young people they are sending our way,” Farlee added. “The caliber of students is phenomenal. Every applicant is outstanding.”

Silver Lake High School junior **MARY KATE GERBER** and McLouth High School junior **EMMA COIT** will be traveling to Washington, D.C., in June to experience the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The trip allows students to get an up-close view of government in action, visit national monuments and meet students from across the state and country.

During Youth Tour, FreeState delegates will join 1,800 youth from across the nation in Washington, D.C. They will see the monuments and other attractions, as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government works.

SAMUEL MANUS, junior at Tonganoxie High School, and **CHRISTOPHER RAITHEL**, junior at Pleasant Ridge High School,

will head west this summer to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to attend the Cooperative Leadership Camp in July. The camp focuses on developing leadership skills, while campers learn the cooperative business model and how it functions. In Colorado, Manus and Raitchel will meet students from Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming, in addition to other students from across Kansas. Campers will form a mock “candy cooperative” and learn about leadership and the co-op industry.

“Without our board’s commitment to giving opportunities to young members, we couldn’t provide these incredible opportunities,” said Farlee. “It just proves that the cooperative difference, and development of young leaders is something FreeState is very proud of.”

Each year, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp are coordinated by Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), the statewide service organization for rural electric cooperatives in Kansas. Formed in 1941 and headquartered in Topeka, KEC represents the interests of and provides needed services and programs to the electric cooperatives that serve Kansas. Today, KEC serves 27 distribution cooperatives and three generation and transmission cooperatives providing electricity to over 200,000 Kansas households and approximately 80% of Kansas.

Read more about the delegates and see excerpts from their submitted essays.



Emma Coit
Youth Tour Winner

EMMA COIT is a junior at McLouth High School. She is the daughter Dale and Heather Coit. Emma plays volleyball and basketball; she also plays the clarinet in band and participates in choir. She is a representative for the Student Leadership Academy at Greenbush where she is working with peers to create a kindness project to implement at school. Emma is also a recipient of the distinguished Ira Brammell award for students at McLouth who demonstrate

excellence in leadership, academics, and sports.

“The cooperative business model is one that helps everyone. My family and I live in a rural area and we are fortunate enough to benefit from this type of model. We have a say, and a voice in how our utility functions. If it wasn’t for the cooperative, there would not be affordable services available to those of us who live outside city limits, or in more rural communities. This is why it is important for younger members to

be involved, because these cooperatives care about members. There is a quote by Helen Keller, ‘Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.’ I think this relates to cooperatives. People can work alone, but it just so much more productive if we all work together.

People love causes, and they love hearing stories of people giving back. FreeState gives back to the communities they serve. For example, in April of 2018 FreeState granted McLouth Public Library \$3,000 to update computers. This is an important aspect of small-town life. This is just one instance of the charitable work they have done. There are numerous acts of charity and generosity that FreeState has done. When companies uplift communities, people are inspired.

One way to start engaging younger members is through schools teaching the cooperative business model, understanding what it does, and why it is unique. Many students don’t understand this model, and that it benefits them in more ways than they actually see. The more students know about the cooperative model, then more would be willing to get involved.”



Christopher Raithel
Camp Winner

CHRISTOPHER RAITHEL is a junior at Pleasant Ridge High School. He is the son of Chuck & Anita Raithel. He is involved in 4-H and Boy Scouts, recently earning the rank of Eagle Scout. At PRHS, Christopher is involved in student council, Scholar's Bowl, and Future Business Leaders of America where he took fourth place in the national FBLA competition in the Intro to Information Technology category. He is a member of the American

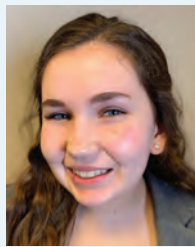
Kennel Club Junior Handlers and enjoys training dogs.

"Businesses must exhibit values to attract younger generations. Many Americans, especially those entering adulthood, are increasingly conscious of environmental issues that our country is involved in, and as such would be more included to support a business that makes an effort to use clean, renewable energy, or takes on other challenges

to decrease its environmental impact and carbon footprint. Members should be kept informed of the cooperative's progress to complete or maintain these goals.

Other values that younger American's look for in a business are fair treatment of employees, e.g. no discrimination or pay issues, and actions by management to make the workplace accepting and kind. The cooperative should present itself as caring about its employees and members to make them feel valued and as much more trusting.

All of this needs to be done while still providing a value-efficient service, because no matter how much people care about the environment or making a better community, if they are unable to afford the service, it won't do much good. As such, it needs to walk a fine line between doing the right thing morally and ethically and doing the right thing in a business sense. By engaging members, it ensures that new members will make their voices heard and provide valuable leadership for the co-op."



Mary Kate Gerber
Youth Tour Winner

MARY KATE GERBER is a junior at Silver Lake High School. She is the daughter of Doug Gerber and Michele Gerber. Mary Kate runs cross-country and track and plays basketball. She has also been involved in school musicals and journalism. She has participated in Scholars Bowl and debate and was inducted into the National Honor Society. She has also been a delegate at the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Founda-

tion and a delegate at the Kansas Student Council Workshop.

"The next generation, my generation, is not a quiet one.

This generation has been told by experts that the future of Earth is grim, and rather than accepting this they have pushed for changes such as renewable energy in order to save dwindling resources. Investing in alternative power sources such as wind turbines and solar panels demonstrates a commitment toward what youth advocate for. My generation could be used as the face of this movement. They could be the delegates that speak out. They could negotiate land needed, and we can be the engineers that install the systems. Involvement in a movement close to the heart would instill a desire to continue to work with cooperatives such as FreeState, ensuring that the cooperative remains in good hands in the future.

Leaders of the future must be nurtured somewhere if they are to have the skills needed to eventually lead companies. This will only happen through the continuance of programs like FreeState's Youth Programs that reach students who live in rural areas.

Engaging youth is a simple task. Do not act as though they are isolated from the rest of the population. Entice them by beginning an active conversation. Learn about their passions. Allow them to narrate the story they see for the future. Passions are the fuel that pushes them to improve their leadership skills. A solid support system will allow them to fulfill the positions they are destined for."



Samuel Manus
Camp Winner

SAMUEL MANUS is a junior at Tonganoxie High School. He is the son of Gretchen Manus. Samuel is actively involved in 4-H and FFA and was recently inducted into the National Honor Society. He runs cross country and also competes for Tonganoxie in the Skills USA program. He founded the Battle Bots team at THS and is a member of the Leavenworth County Youth Leaders. Samuel serves his

county by volunteering for the Stranger Township Fire Department.

"Cooperatives look to the upcoming generation of young people to form their strategies for the future. The best way to find them is to engage with them while they are young. Embrace and adapt to the values they hold. Giving young people opportunities and a message to embrace as well and an opportunity to voice their opinions will create a constructive environment.

Keeping up with changes in values and interests can allow co-ops to adapt and present relevant cases to members. A powerful method to connect with members is to identify local issues that they are passionately connected with. Identify why co-ops are different from for-profit companies and providing facts that separate the cooperative from these profit-only focused monopolies, cooperatives can engage members while gaining allies.

Cooperatives are member-owned making them extremely sensitive to the public's demands and concerns. Co-ops can use this to emphasize that future members will not be a part of an abusive company or pressing tactics, because that type of attitude frightens people. Highlighting the fact that the cooperative business model will be more receptive to conducting business directly with the public, thus giving the local people more say in the happenings of their own region, will strike a chord with future members who desire to be involved with local organizations."

Public Health Concerns Cancel Annual Meeting

Continued from page 16A ▶

several hundred members and guests is prudent in helping to slow the transmission of the virus.

“We want our members to know that we are taking steps to be prepared in the event there is a significant impact on our communities,” Foss said. “We are educating our staff and working on keeping our employees healthy so that we can continue to provide all members with the service you expect.”

FreeState will continue to operate normally with some cooperative staff working remotely.

“We want our members to know that the situation we’re facing is fluid, and if you need us, we’ll be here,” Foss said. “We are committed to maintaining open communication and will be utilizing Facebook and our website to send important information out to our members regarding business.”

For more information visit www.freestate.coop, as well as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

TIPS TO PREVENT COVID-19 (coronavirus)



AVOID CLOSE CONTACT



CLEAN AND DISINFECT DAILY



CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN



STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK



Lineman Appreciation Day
April 13, 2020

**Some people can light up your life.
A rare few light up the world.**