



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Watts Ahead

## Ninnescah Rural Electric Co-op, Inc.

### Board of Trustees

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### Staff

**Teresa Miller**  
General Manager

**Robert Lamatsch**  
Manager of Operations

### In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

## Nomination Committee Selected

At the regularly scheduled board meeting held on Nov. 24, 2020, the Ninnescah Rural Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees selected a nominating committee. Those appointed were:

- ▶ **JACK DEVINEY**, Attica
- ▶ **WILBUR K. WOOD**, Haviland
- ▶ **MARVIN JANTZ**, Haviland
- ▶ **KEN W. LEWTON**, Coats
- ▶ **STEVE MOORE**, Stafford
- ▶ **MORGAN J. TRINKLE**, Preston
- ▶ **JAY A. DERLEY**, Lewis
- ▶ **JON M. MCCLURE**, Stafford
- ▶ **TERAH LAMBERT**, Sun City

The nominating committee will meet at Ninnescah's office on Friday, Feb. 5, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. to select members of the cooperative to run for office. These nominees will be voted on at the annual meeting.

If anyone wishes to place a member's name into nomination (husband or wife

if signed jointly), please contact any nominating committee member before the nominating committee meeting in February. The committee shall prepare and post at the office of the cooperative at least 25 days prior to the annual meeting a list of nominations for trustee. Any 15 or more members may make other nominations in writing over their signature not less than 20 days prior to the annual meeting and the secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

**Watch for  
Upcoming  
Information  
About YOUR  
Annual Meeting**

More details to follow in next month's issue of *Kansas Country Living*.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

Source: [www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)



# When Your Lights Go Out We Do, Too

One of the questions we get asked most often is what happens during an outage. We want to answer some of those questions this month.

## What happens when an outage occurs?

Members should always report an outage. Members can report outages by calling the office at 800-828-5538 or 620-672-5538. Every call helps. Outage calls also start the dispatching process of crews to the outage to begin restoring power as quickly and safely as possible.

If an outage occurs during regular business hours, your call is routed to our office first, and one of our member service representatives records your service address and enters it into our outage system. Typically, our member services representatives have little information initially about the outage so keep that in mind when making phone calls to the office. Ninnescah Electric's engineering and line departments are then notified by our outage system that there is an outage and crews are then dispatched to the location to begin troubleshooting.

If an outage occurs outside regular business hours, your calls go to our third-party call center to go through the same process.

Linemen are required to rotate being on call for after hours response. If an outage occurs during that time, they are dispatched from their home to respond to the outage. Keep in mind that after-hours dispatching may take longer due to the nature of getting crews to the location. With only two linemen on call after hours and many areas to cover, it may take longer than an outage occurring during the day when all crews are available and able to cover a larger area.

If after-hours outages are significant, Ninnescah Electric

may call in our employees to assist with after-hours calls or dispatching crews to the reported outages.

During storm season (spring and winter) advance notice is often given by weather bureaus. Ninnescah Electric monitors these conditions to be as proactive as possible. Additional linemen and employees are placed on call to serve members quicker in the event of a significant outage or infrastructure damage caused by a storm. Scout teams can also be assembled to help categorize outages accordingly.

During outages, there are a few things that keep linemen from actively responding, like a fire in progress, a gas leak, and lightning. As soon as it is safe to do so, our crews are working to restore power no matter how cold, rainy, or snowy it gets.

## Why are my neighbor's lights on, but I'm in the dark?

Your home may be on a different distribution line than your neighbor. To handle the load, individual residences use different lines, substations, and electric poles to provide power.

## Why aren't you coming to my residence first?

When Ninnescah Electric has an outage, we follow a protocol for restoring power quickly. Relatively small outages or isolated outages are dispatched in the order they are received or the availability of a crew.

During an outage, we begin by determining the source. We assess our generation facilities and determine the source

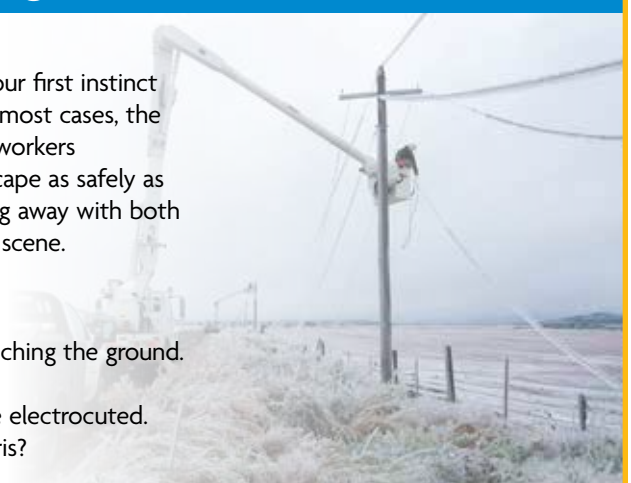
## Winter Weather Can Bring Power Lines Down

### Stay Where You Are

You've just been in an accident involving a downed power line. Your first instinct might be to get out and run, but that could cost you your life. In most cases, the safest place to be is inside your vehicle. Wait until electric utility workers de-energize the power. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, escape as safely as possible by jumping out without touching the vehicle and hopping away with both feet together as far as you can. Warn others not to approach the scene.

### You Should Know:

- ▶ Downed power lines are extremely dangerous and even deadly.
- ▶ Electric current can travel through the ground and anything touching the ground.
- ▶ Stray voltage spreads like ripples on a pond.
- ▶ If you step from one "ripple" (voltage) to another, you could be electrocuted.
- ▶ Downed lines could be hiding under standing water, ice or debris?



to 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:

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

### What causes an outage?

There are common reasons why outages occur. The majority of outages are weather-related events, 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 lines and install animal guards on pole-top transformers. We use squirrel guards, raptor protectors, and 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 auto accidents can cause damage to power poles or lines. In our area, it is also common to have farm-related outages like equipment getting tangled in the wire. It is essential to be aware of your surroundings while working on the farm. It not only ensures your 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. Alternatively, an overload may also cause failure. We typically see these problems on extremely hot or high peak days during May through September.

**POWER SUPPLIER** failure can also cause outages. As a distribution cooperative, we are reliant on Midwest Energy and Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo). If one of those suppliers is experiencing an outage, it may impact 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 or transmission poles.

Outages may vary depending on the season and can last a few seconds to a few 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, especially when examining the lines by foot to find the source of an outage.

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

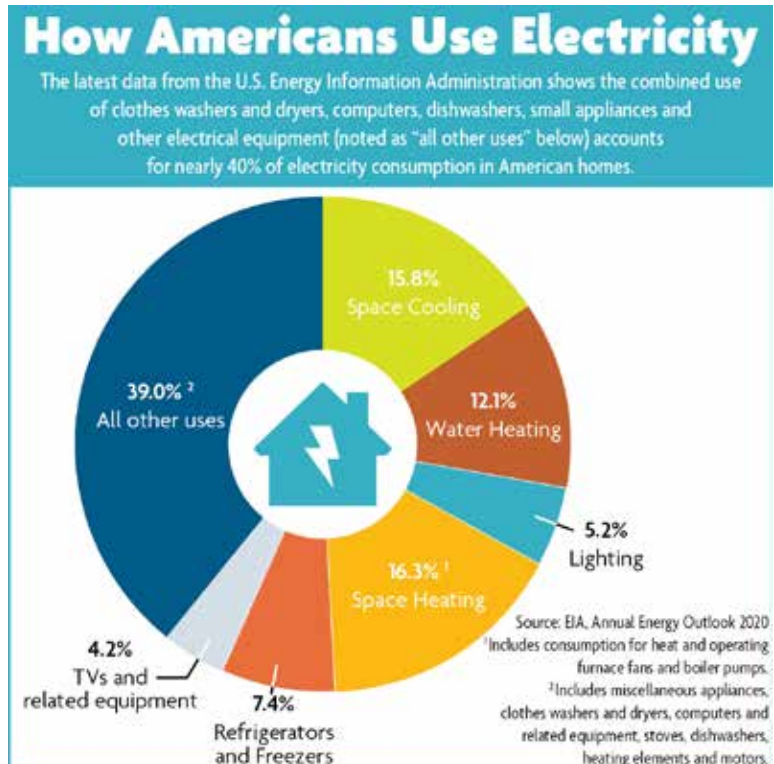
### What do we do to prevent outages?

**PLANNED OUTAGES** are a part of upgrading and repairing equipment safely. They are used to limit longer, unplanned outages later. We notify you before a planned outage and make every effort to limit negative impacts. Before a planned outage a phone call alerting you of the outage is sent out.

**TREE TRIMMING** is one maintenance practice we can do to help limit tree damage. Ninnescah Electric has a tree crew to work specifically on right-of-way clearance. They can also be called out to remove damaged trees so that linemen can get to an area to begin working safely.

**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.

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



feeling chilled?

## HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY

Remember these safety tips when using a space heater this season.



Place on a flat, level surface



Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away



Make sure the cord is not frayed or cracked



Plug it directly into the outlet



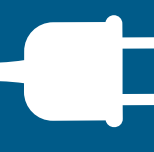
Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which can overheat



Follow all instructions and use models endorsed by a reputable testing lab



Do not use around small children or pets



Do not use a heater with a damaged plug or prongs

## Time to Ditch Your Old Space Heater

If you can't remember when you purchased your space heater, it might be time to replace it. Just as the flip phones of yesteryear have progressed into today's modern cell phone, portable space heaters have come a long way too. Most of today's models have built-in safety features, such as non-exposed coils and sensors that detect overheating or touch, as well as an automatic shut-off feature in case it gets tipped over.

Regardless of whether your space heater is fresh out of the box or several years old, it should be used safely. Most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve using one, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires, right behind cooking.

Along with using a unit that is in good working order, be sure to keep clothing, papers, rugs and other flammable items at least 3 feet away from a space heater. More than half of the heating-related home fires start when items are too close to the heat source, according to the NFPA, including

upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

Safe Electricity and Ninnescah Electric recommend these additional space heater safety tips:

- ▶ Read all instructions and only use as recommended.
  - ▶ Do not leave a space heater unattended.
  - ▶ Plug it directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater cycling on and off.
  - ▶ Unplug any other item from the outlet you are using; also try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
  - ▶ Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
  - ▶ Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
  - ▶ Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
  - ▶ Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
- Use a space heater with care. For additional safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Welcome New Members

Jessie Lee &/or Doris K Wolfe – *Lyndon*

Kelvin Shinliver – *Nashville*

Thomas Garner Inc – *St. John*

Jace &/or Kala B Westerman – *Zenda*

Patricia J &/or John D Henson – *Turon*

Robert Gideon &/or Janet Lamm – *Wichita*

Dale R &/or Tauna Adelhardt – *Cunningham*

Andrew Scheck &/or Donna K Reid  
– *Macksville*

