

P.O. Box 967, Pratt, KS 67124
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www.ninnescah.com



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Watts Ahead

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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.

NINNESCAH ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 83rd Annual Meeting



Don't Miss This Year's Events



Announcement of Trustees &
Scholarship Winners

Co-op Reports

Door Prizes

Each member in attendance will receive a
credit on their electric bill!

**Join us for a free dinner
Tuesday, June 8**



Registration at 5 p.m.

Dinner at 6 p.m.

Meeting to follow



**Meeting will be held at the
Pratt Municipal Building.**

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AFTER A STORM

When the skies clear and the birds sing, know that the storm's fury could have created electrical hazards that you may or may not be able to see. Conditions in which stray electricity could energize the area, a person or objects include:

DOWNED POWER LINES

- ▶ on the ground
- ▶ under storm debris
- ▶ draped over or touching a metal fence
- ▶ covered by standing water
- ▶ across or by the road
- ▶ hidden in tree branches

OTHER POSSIBLE DAMAGE

- ▶ drooping or sagging lines (never try to move one)
- ▶ split or broken utility poles
- ▶ damage to a padmount transformer (green box)
- ▶ lightning strike to a substation transformer
- ▶ damaged or unstable guy wires

NEVER GO NEAR downed power lines or other damaged electrical equipment to assess damage or clean up the area. **STAY AWAY** and call 911 to report damage.

Power lines and other electrical equipment do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame) or on fire to be energized.

We're Ready for Storm Season. Are You?

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, we welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings many favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. Our region is known for harmful tornadoes and severe storms, often destroying everything in the storm's path. These potential weather events can also cause destruction to our electrical system, but we want you to know that Ninnescah crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. Ninnescah encourages you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- ▶ Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- ▶ Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked

with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- ▶ Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- ▶ Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Ninnescah's website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

We hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. Ninnescah recommends you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.



What Color Mulch do Tomatoes Prefer?

Colored mulches can help increase the production of some garden crops

You may not think of tomatoes as a fickle fruit, but Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham says that the popular garden crop can, indeed, be picky.

Upham noted that colored plastic mulches have gained favor over the more traditional black plastic mulch because they seem to increase the production of marketable fruit. Plastic mulches have long been known to promote earlier fruiting, increased yields and weed control.

“With tomatoes, the color of choice has been red (mulch),” Upham said.

When the season’s weather is “perfect” for growing tomatoes, Upham said there may be no difference in production when using various plastic mulches. But when growing conditions are less than favorable, gardeners may experience up to a 20% increase in their tomato crop when using red mulch — though, on average, the increase is more like 12%.

For best results, Upham suggests home gardeners lay a drip irrigation line near the center of where the mulch will lay, because “the plastic will prevent rainwater or overhead irrigation from reaching the plants.”

Additional steps include:

- ▶ Use a hoe to construct trenches for the outer 6 inches of the plastic mulch. “This allows the center of the bed to be undisturbed, with the edges of the mulch draping down into the trench,” Upham said.
- ▶ Fill the trenches to cover the edges of the mulch. “This will prevent wind from catching and blowing the mulch,” according to Upham.

Fertilizing Cole Crops

In a recent Horticulture Newsletter from K-State Research

and Extension, Upham also shared tips for fertilizing such cole crops as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.

If those crops made it through recent cold snaps, they will need a fertilizer boost, he said. “These plants need to mature before summer heat arrives, so they must grow quickly while the weather is cool,” Upham said. “A side dressing of fertilizer about three weeks after transplanting helps these plants grow rapidly.”

Upham suggests using fertilizers high in nitrogen, such as nitrate of soda or blood meal at the rate of one-third cup per 10 feet of row. Fertilizer must be watered in, unless timely rains do the job for you.

Sharpening Your Mower’s Blade

Upham also has advice for kicking off lawn-mowing season.

“Remember that a dull lawn mower blade gives the lawn a whitish cast,” he said. “A dull blade does not cut cleanly but rather shreds the ends of the leaf blades. The shredded ends dry out, giving the lawn that whitish look.”

He added that a sharp blade is even more important when turf starts putting up seeds. “The seed head stems are much tougher than the grass blades and more likely to shred,” he said.

Under normal use, mower blades should be sharpened every 10 hours of use.

Upham and his colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes. The newsletter is available to view online at <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html> or can be delivered by email each week.

Welcome New Members

Joe Brummer – Ft. Collins, Colorado

Wes Robinson – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

SNR Kansas Operating LLC – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Ross Latta – Harper

PS Walnut Farms LLC – Douglass

Gabriel &/or Chelsie D Fowler – Andover

Mike &/or Angela G Bradshaw – Medicine Lodge

Blue Barn Land & Cattle – Haviland

LD &/or Deborah A Dewitt – Greensburg



No Game Worth Getting Struck by Lightning

Perhaps you've been a parent, coach or player at an outdoor sporting event in a similar predicament: the clouds roll in and the sky gets dark, but you HAVE to finish the game. After all, it will only take a few more minutes. Or, not wanting to appear overly cautious or paranoid, you wait for others to give the signal.

This is one situation when finishing the game, match or inning is not worth the risk. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 20 to 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the United States, each of which is a potential killer, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). Some flashes strike directly under the storm where it is raining. Other times, the flashes reach away from the storm in places where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or nonexistent and catch people off guard.

About 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering devastating and permanent neurological injuries. About two-thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

The NWS recommends that outdoor recreation organizers have an established lightning safety plan and follow it every time inclement weather conditions are present.

As part of the plan, coaches or organizers should establish who will listen to the latest accurate weather forecasts prior to a sporting event. It should also be clear who will make the decision to postpone or cancel if necessary.

The lightning safety guidelines should also address the following, according to the NWS:

Once in play, when should the activities be stopped?

When you see lightning, hear thunder or the skies look threatening.

Where should participants, officials and spectators go for safety?

No place outside is safe. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing are ideal. Small outdoor buildings, including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds and pavilions are NOT safe places to seek shelter.

When should activities be resumed?

A minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Electrical charges can linger in clouds after a storm has seemingly passed.

Who should monitor the weather and make decisions about play?

A level-headed and objective person should be the designated weather and lightning monitor. This should NOT be the coach, umpire or referee. The lightning monitor should know the weather safety guidelines and be empowered by teams, parents, coaches and spectators to make decisions.

What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?

Call 911 for immediate medical attention. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR or an automated external defibrillator may be needed if the individual's breathing or heart has stopped.

The NWS webpage on lightning safety and outdoor sports activities answers these questions in more detail.

Don't make decisions on when to call the game or match based on personal experience or pressure from others.



STORMS CAN BRING HIDDEN ELECTRICAL DANGERS

OUTSIDE

Severe weather can cause damage to overhead power lines. That damage could be noticeable — a downed line across an open road, for instance. However, it may not be as obvious if it is camouflaged by storm damage.

Whether you see a downed line or you suspect one could be hidden under debris or standing water do not go near the area. Stay away and call 911, and a crew will be dispatched to de-energize the line. Warn others to stay away as well.

Power lines and other electrical equipment do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame) or on fire to be energized.

AT HOME

Never step into a flooded basement or other standing water. The water could be covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords.

If your home's electrical system has been damaged, waterlogged or otherwise compromised, have it thoroughly inspected by a professional electrician before using any electricity (inside or out).

ALWAYS presume a downed power line is energized, dangerous and deadly.