



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

**SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# currentnews

## Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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### Staff

**Scott Ayres**  
General Manager/CEO

**Lora Alloway**  
Office Manager

**Kyle Pipkin**  
Line Superintendent

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# May is Military Appreciation Month



**Scott Ayres**

Service. Mission. Country. You likely identified immediately (and correctly) that these three words describe our nation's veterans. They also succinctly

describe a core co-op ethos.

While veterans are innately motivated to serve, in a similar vein, electric co-ops are guided by foundational principles that put their community first. After all, electric co-ops were founded to bring electricity to rural areas where there was none. In doing so, they powered local economies and helped them to thrive. I believe this close connection to an essential mission is why there are so many veterans in the utility industry and why they are such a great fit for electric co-ops.

Today's veterans are highly skilled because everyone who joins the military is either trained in a tech career field or exposed to advanced technology during their years of service. Many veterans have skills in advanced disciplines such as engineering, electronics, or mechanics, which are all beneficial for the utility industry. Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is proud to employ veterans, and we're especially grateful for their contributions to the co-op and to our community.

### Leadership and Teambuilding Skills

Our veteran colleagues joined the co-op equipped with training in leadership and teamwork. While on active duty within their units, service members work closely together because they know their lives depend on each other's

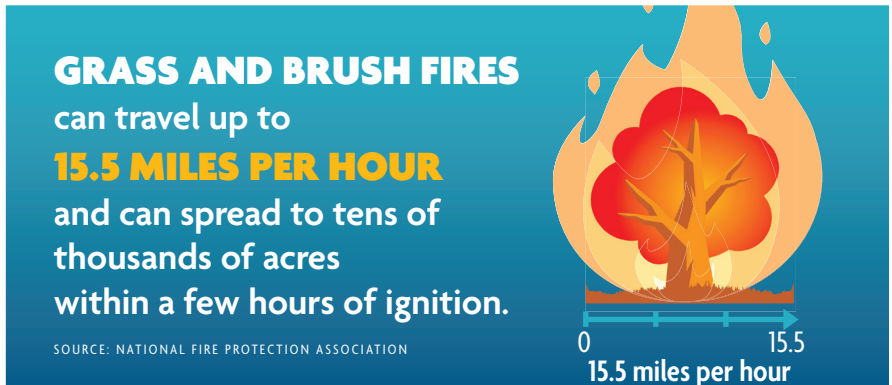
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# Controlling a Controlled Burn

Controlled burns (also known as prescribed fires) can get out of hand and quickly accelerate. When planning controlled burns, follow these safety guidelines:

- ▶ Do your research before you begin. There are many safety considerations; check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before implementing one.
- ▶ Be sure to acquire any necessary safety permits and follow local ordinances related to controlled burns.
- ▶ Notify your local fire department and neighbors about the controlled burn ahead of time.
- ▶ Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (generally, relative humidity should be 40% or higher).
- ▶ Do not initiate a controlled burn during a Red Flag Warning, Fire Weather Watch or any other fire ban.
- ▶ Clear all vegetation and weeds at least 10 feet (15 feet is better if applicable) around the base of any electric utility



- pole in the affected area, then wet the base of the poles with water before beginning your burn.
- ▶ After any controlled burn, be sure to inspect the electric utility poles for damage. Fire damage is usually evident by blackening or scorch marks; however, even slight discoloration can indicate a serious problem. Sometimes, hot embers can burn the poles from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.
- ▶ If your fire gets out of control, gets

too close to a power pole or if the pole catches on fire, call 911 and Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative at 316-542-3131.

- ▶ Once a fire breaks out, never spray water near the pole, power lines or any other utility equipment. To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact Line Superintendent Kyle Pipkin at 316-542-3131.

For more information about electrical safety, go to [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

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actions. This fosters a high level of self-discipline, sense of personal responsibility and passion for excellence.

The utility industry is increasingly complex and undergoing profound transformation. While there is the traditional engineering and vegetation management aspect of the utility industry, it now also encompasses technology, cybersecurity and the electrification of the transportation sector and other areas of the economy. Veterans are adept at responding to changing conditions and learning and adapting to new technologies, which is essential in our evolving industry.

### Mission-Oriented Outlook

Working for an electric co-op is more than a job. There is a clear mission in the work — to help our consumer-members and the community. When you work so closely with the community, you can't help but feel a sense of commitment and responsibility to our members. It's similar to the sense of duty and responsibility that veterans experience in the military. They feel deep, personal responsibility and commitment to their co-op team members and to the

members we serve. Veterans are trustworthy and goal oriented, wanting to do right for their co-op and their community.

May is Military Appreciation Month and at Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative, we are grateful to have veterans within our ranks and we are proud to serve them and their families within our community. But beyond our gratitude, we demonstrate our deep appreciation through our actions and ongoing commitment to veterans and their families.

At the national level, electric co-ops support the "Vets Power Us" program, which is aimed at employing and honoring veterans and their families. This effort involves partnering with other electric co-ops across the country along with the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, and others to hire veterans in the energy industry.

This month I hope you'll join me in recognizing the sacrifices veterans have made to our great country — and the many contributions they continue to make to our wonderful community. Veterans, we salute you!

# Energy Savings for Small Businesses

Electric cooperatives are proud to serve small businesses that are essential to our local Kansas communities. As costs for pretty much everything continue to rise, small business owners are feeling strained. Luckily, there are steps Kansas' small business owners can take to conserve energy — and save money.

Many small businesses are in commercial buildings smaller than 50,000 square feet. These buildings use 44% of the energy consumed by commercial buildings in the United States. A survey conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business found that energy costs are a top-three expense for more than a third of the nation's small businesses.

Small businesses can reduce their energy costs by taking advantage of competitive rates, making upgrades to increase efficiency and making simple changes to how they do business. This can have a direct effect on a business's bottom line and make it more competitive in the current market.

Here are a few areas small business owners can focus on saving energy and money.

## Lighting

Many small businesses, like offices and retail stores, depend greatly on lighting, which can be a major expense. Two ways to increase the efficiency of your business's lighting system include installing energy efficient equipment (bulbs and/or fixtures) and changing how you use lighting.

New LED bulbs use less energy and last much longer. LEDs come in a variety of options and prices, making them great replacements for older, inefficient bulbs.

Encourage employees to turn off



Tracking energy use and maintaining the heating and cooling system can help small business owners save on energy bills.

lights when they're not being used. You can also install light switches with sensors, so lights automatically turn off when no one is in the room.

## Equipment and Appliances

Turning off office equipment and appliances can help save energy and money. Computer monitors can add up to \$30 to an office's energy bill if left on during evenings and weekends.

Restaurants typically use up to 10 times more energy per square foot than other commercial buildings. To save money, it is important to have energy efficient food service equipment.

Additionally, kitchens in many other kinds of small businesses use microwaves, coffee makers and refrigerators, which should be considered when reviewing overall energy use.

## Heating and Cooling Systems

Heating and cooling account for a large portion of a small business's energy bills.

Tracking energy use and maintaining the heating and cooling system can help small business owners save on energy bills. The system should be inspected annually, and filters should be replaced regularly. If the system needs replacing, consider alternative options

like a heat pump with a seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) of 13 or higher.

## Air Leaks and Insulation

Just like our homes, small businesses have windows, walls, a roof and insulation as part of their building envelope. Air leaks can lead to higher bills. Leaks typically are found around windows, doors, walls and the roof. Seal these areas for additional energy savings.

## Water

Efficient use of energy and water go hand in hand. In most cases, gas or electricity is used to heat water, which costs money. The more heated water your business uses, the more you can save by determining how to use water most efficiently. Lowering the water temperature between 110 and 120 degrees is an easy way to save on water heating.

## Transportation

Many businesses may recognize fuel savings and lower the total cost of fleet ownership and transportation networks by switching to electric vehicles (EVs).

EVs have lower maintenance costs because they are more reliable than internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. This is because EVs have fewer mechanical parts that can break, and they often provide better data to allow for more proactive maintenance. Depending on your business's transportation needs, EVs may be able to provide better energy savings for the long-term.

We all can relate to the increasing costs of just about everything these days. All of us, including small businesses, can take simple steps to better control how much energy we use and how we use it.



# 85th Annual Meeting Highlights



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Board President Clint DeVore called the meeting to order and thanked the member-owners who took time out to attend the night's activities.

After nominees for directors were announced and ballots were tallied, the following directors were reelected:

- ▶ **CINDY FOSTER** — Territory 1
- ▶ **ALAN SMARSH** — Territory 2
- ▶ **REX SMITH** — Territory 3

General Manager Scott Ayres provided members with information regarding the cooperative's mission statement that reads "Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable, innovative energy solutions for you, our member-owners." Ayres also provided updates on the Cheney and Maize solar projects, and approved general retirement totaling approximately \$451,254. He updated members on the

approved work plan, which provides funding for more than \$8 million in infrastructure upgrades over the next four years.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative purchased a 2022 Rivian R1T electric pickup last year to enhance our knowledge regarding range, reliability and charging options. The Rivian was on display in front of The Cotillion for members to see.

2022 Youth Tour winners **AMELIA MENG**, Cheney High School, and **MICAH GOODMAN**, Bishop Carroll High School, provided the membership with a brief report of their trip.

## 2023 Youth Tour Winners and a \$500 College Scholarship Are:

### ▶ ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

**LEVI SELF**, son of Travis and Erin Self, Cheney High School.

### ▶ COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

**MESA BRADBURY**, daughter of Harvey and Megan Bradbury, Andale High School.

## The \$500 College Scholarship Recipients Are:

▶ **CHLOE YOUNG**, daughter of Chad and Brooke Young, Cheney High School.

▶ **LANDON KROUPA**, son of Cory Kroupa, Bishop Carroll High School.

## 2023 Service Awards:

- ▶ **KYLE PIPKIN** — 25 years of service
- ▶ **LORA ALLOWAY** and **ANDY RIGGS** — 20 years of service
- ▶ **MARGIE CONYAC**, director, and **ALAN SMARSH**, director — 15 years of service
- ▶ **JACQUE MATCHETT** — 10 years of service
- ▶ **VICTOR AYALA** — 5 years of service

The evening finished with drawings from prizes provided by Sedgwick County Electric Co-op, Border States Electric, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) and KSI a subsidiary KEPCo.



Sedgwick County Electric's 2022 and 2023 Youth Tour winners (from left) Micah Goodman, Landon Kroupa, Chloe Young, Levi Self and Amelia Meng.