



SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# currentnews

## SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Clint DeVore**  
President

**Cindy Foster**  
Vice President

**Margie Conyac**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Joe Baalman**  
Director

**Eugene Scheer**  
Director

**Alan J. Smarsh**  
Director

**Rex Smith**  
Director

**Stan Theis**  
Director

### STAFF

**Scott Ayres**  
General Manager/CEO

**Lora Alloway**  
Office Manager

**Kyle Pipkin**  
Line Superintendent

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 220  
1355 S. 383rd St. West  
Cheney, KS 67025  
316-542-3131  
Fax: 316-542-3943

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Pressure Emerging in Electric Rates

Two goals set by the Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors are to provide safe, reliable, innovative, energy solutions and to maintain the financial integrity of the cooperative. Achieving these goals requires awareness of events that can impact our mission along with transparent and decisive action by the board and management.

We have updated our financial forecast. This process predicts the revenue stream that will cover our expenses for the upcoming year and looks into the future to project our financial needs for the next 10 years. For 2024, we forecast a shortfall in our budget, which our financial projections have predicted for several years.

The maintenance of the electric grid and replacement of an aging plant comes with a cost. Over the past several years, I have discussed our construction work plan, which is implemented to provide safe and reliable electricity to members. The work plan calls for an investment of nearly \$1,600,000 each year. Unfortunately, with today's cost of materials, equipment and labor, that money does not get as much done for us as it did a few years ago.

Everyone is experiencing inflation,



Scott Ayres

*Continued on page 12D ▶*

*October is National*  
**CO-OP MONTH**

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

*That's the power of co-op membership.*

# LOOK UP

Before You Climb

Using a ladder near overhead power lines could cause electrocution.

1. Keep yourself and equipment 10 feet from overhead power lines.
  - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
  - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
2. Use a ladder during ideal weather conditions.
  - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
  - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
3. Do not trim trees/branches that are near power lines.
  - ▶ It is dangerous to trim near overhead power lines.
  - ▶ By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.
4. Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.
  - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
  - ▶ Always follow the 10-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.



Follow manufacturer's safety recommendations when using a ladder. Look up before you climb.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

## Outage Reporting Procedures

Need to Report an Outage?

316-542-3131



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative works with Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC) for all our after-hours outage reporting. CRC verifies

individual outages on their automated system by calling from one of their toll-free numbers. This permits CRC to prioritize outages to ensure power is restored in a safe and timely manner. CRC will also verify main fuse/breakers have been checked, ask member if meter has a display, and relay fees if outage is on the member's side.

If you see downed power poles or downed electric lines, please call 316-542-3131 or dial 911 to report them.

We do not monitor Facebook or X (formerly Twitter) for outage information, please call 316-542-3131 to report your outage.

## Baalmann Receives Gold Credential



Joe Baalmann

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative Director **JOE BAALMANN** recently completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) requirements to receive his Director Gold credential. The credential recognizes directors committed to continuing their education and demonstrates their ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability.

## NEW METERING SYSTEM UPDATE

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is upgrading our advanced metering infrastructure system (AMI), which enables two-way communication between the cooperative and our members. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI will help Sedgwick County Electric save money with real-time data and ultimately improve power reliability for our electrical system.



# Co-op Continues Outstanding Safety Record

Every employee has the right to go home safe and healthy at the end of every day. Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is committed to the safety of their employees. Safety is practiced in our day-to-day activities from tailgate discussions and reviewing work procedures to monthly safety meetings.

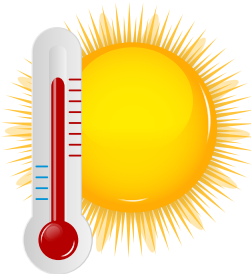
Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative earned a No Lost Time Accident Award and was recognized at the Kansas Electric Cooperative, Inc. Summer Meeting in August for working **177,446 EMPLOYEE HOURS** with no lost time accidents.

# Thank You for Participating in Peak Control

Sedgwick County Electric Co-op would like to thank those members who participated in peak alerts.

Members who reduced their electric usage from 3-6 p.m. on days when temperatures were 95 degrees or higher during June, July, August and September helped keep the peak demand cost down.

Working together and using energy wisely help keep our costs down and electric rates stable.



## DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS NOV. 3

Daylight saving time is a perfect time to check fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and to change batteries. Make sure smoke detectors work properly by using the alarm test option. Use a vacuum to make sure there are no cobwebs, spiders or other little insects taking up residence, which could hinder the effects of the smoke alarm.

Detectors play a larger role in survival than one might think. A recent study showed that inoperable smoke alarms caused two-thirds of fire-related deaths due to damage, defects and missing batteries. Write the date on the new battery to ensure there will be no questions about when it was last replaced.

Daylight saving time is also a great opportunity to review home safety with family members including escape routes and checking all electrical outlets. Practice a home safety review and test procedures on evacuating safely in an emergency situation. Look through the house for any hazards, such as overloaded or improperly placed extension cords. It is recommended to make sure areas around the furnace, water heater and stove are clear of debris that can cause fire.

**Remember to set your clocks back one hour before 2 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 3.**

## SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC BOARD IS SEEKING TO FILL TERRITORY 4 DIRECTOR VACANCY

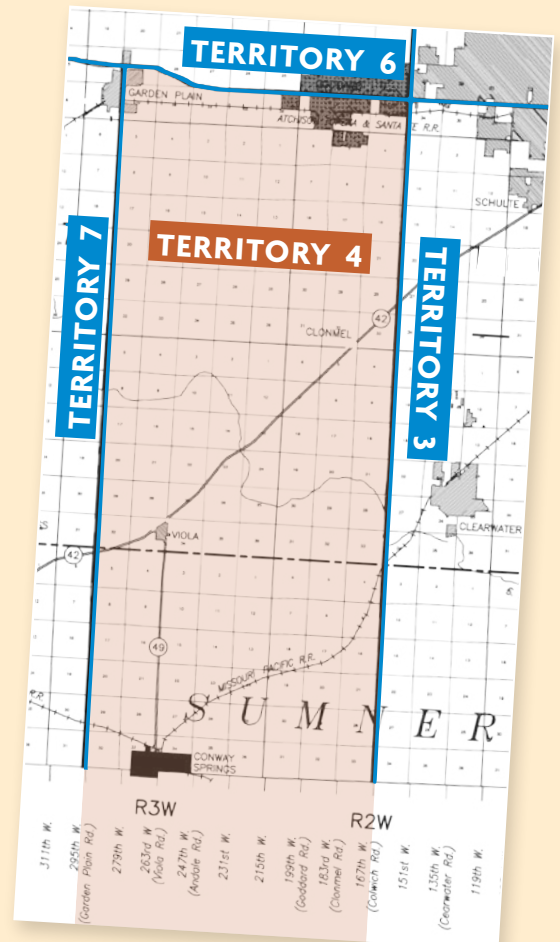
**Territory 4 Boundaries: West of 167th St. W., East of 295th St. W., South of US 54**

Due to the unfortunate passing of board member Don Metzen, the Sedgwick County Electric Board of Directors seeks to fill the vacant position of director representing Territory 4.

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS ARE:

- ▶ Residential member of the cooperative, within Territory 4 for a minimum of three years.
- ▶ Able to attend monthly board meetings.

To inquire about additional qualifications or to become a candidate for director please contact Jo Luehrs at 316-542-3131 or email [jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop](mailto:jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop).



## ARE YOU A CO-OP VOTER?

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative has again joined America's electric cooperatives to help get out the vote in our community by being a part of the Co-ops Vote program. This collaborative effort provides us the opportunity to educate lawmakers, build awareness about our issues and concerns, and advocate for policies that are important to our co-op and our community.

Federal, state and local elections offer opportunities to vote for leaders who support energy policies that promote safe, reliable and affordable energy. In particular, they allow us to elect public officials who understand and appreciate America's electric cooperatives and will serve as our champion during policy discussions.

Now is the perfect time to confirm that you are registered to vote and encourage new voters to get registered. For voter resources and to learn the five simple steps to being a co-op voter, visit the Co-ops Vote website at [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop).

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan program

developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. Co-op voters across 48 states work together to ensure that electric co-ops have a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact.

Co-ops are a trusted voice in Washington, D.C. The more our community members turn out to vote, the greater the opportunity we have to elect leaders who understand co-ops and the issues we face.

The co-op voice is powerful, and it starts with you!



## Pressure Emerging in Electric Rates *Continued from page 12A* ▶

and your electric cooperative is no different. In the past four years, we have seen an increase between 30% and 150% in the cost of material items such as wire, transformers, crossarms, service boxes, and insulators. We also need to keep more material on hand since it takes much longer to get materials. The cost of trucks, labor, insurance, and property taxes is even more burdensome on electric rates.

While we have seen these major increases in costs over the past four years, we were able to minimize the impact on our members by delaying some projects and prioritizing less expensive projects. Those actions help for a short period of time, but cost increases are now showing up in the 2025 budget and do not appear to be softening. We continue to look for ways to limit the impact increased costs have on our electric rates.

Sedgwick County Electric is not the only utility facing these issues. The Energy Information Administration (EIA), the federal organization that tracks everything to do with all forms of energy, has indicated residential electric prices are up 6.2% from 2022 to 2023. For 2024, EIA is projecting a moderate increase in rates due to much higher summer temperatures. In comparison, Sedgwick County Electric has not raised rates since 2018, seven years ago.

Sedgwick County Electric is a not-for-profit organization and operates at cost. Any revenues that exceed expenses are called margins. Last year, margins were allocated to you, as capital credits, in proportion to the amount you are billed for electricity during that year. These capital credits reflect your ownership in Sedgwick County Electric. The cooperative uses capital credits to fund operation activities and reduce borrowing.

In 2024, the board of directors approved the general retirement of 100% of the capital credits from the 2006 patronage totaling approximately \$551,326.

Sedgwick County Electric's Board of Directors and management have worked hard to hold off a rate increase for as long as possible even while other electric market prices have increased dramatically.

To provide safe and reliable electric service and maintain financial integrity for the cooperative, a fixed charge/minimum monthly rate increase from \$25 per month to \$35 per month for Residential Service Rates 1 and 2, and General Service Rate 9 will be needed in January 2025 to recover the projected shortfall. We will keep you informed of any changes and continue to work hard to minimize the impact on our rates.