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Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

**SEDGWICK COUNTY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

currentnews

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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FROM THE MANAGER

Power in Your Hands

Whether we're training new employees or talking to members out and about, I always make it a point to discuss what makes electric co-ops different from other types of utilities. This month, I thought I'd tell you of few of the things I often share.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative's decisions are made locally, by directors who also live right here in our community. Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here — to pay for the electricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We're a co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members.

You may notice that each year, we schedule our annual meeting so we can hear from you. Previously we conducted a member survey to gather your feedback on co-op programs and services so that we can plan and adjust for the future.

Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you have to say.

Because you are part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our

team to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity and first-class service, no matter what the economy — and supply chain issues — throw at us.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative works daily to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket.

We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services and offerings. For example, we offer rebates on new air-source and ground-source heat pumps and electric water heaters. You can also sign up for SmartHub to track your daily usage or pay your monthly bill.

Please know that you — the members of Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative — are at the heart of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness, and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, friendly service you expect and deserve. While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community. We hope to see or hear from you soon. This co-op was created for you, the members. The power is in your hands.



Scott Ayres

Listen for Peak Alerts and Save

This month, we are asking members to participate in Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative's Peak Control program. This voluntary program helps you save on your summer energy bills and can also help the co-op hold down wholesale power costs in the other eight months during our off-peak period.

A major portion of our annual wholesale power bill is based on power consumed during the 3 to 6 p.m. demand time frame during the summer months. The price of electricity is at a premium during that three-hour window due to the "high demand" for energy production during those hot, summer hours.

What is Peak Control?

Peak control is a voluntary program in which our members can participate to hold down electricity cost.

How Can I Participate in Peak Control?

You can participate by monitoring your use of electric appliances and equipment that require larger amounts of electricity during peak hours. Any steps you can take to lower your energy use from 3 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday will help control costs.

When Should I Participate in Peak Control?

Participate when "Peak Alerts" are issued, typically during the hours of 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays from June 1 through Sept. 30. Like us on Facebook and follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) to receive peak alerts.

The actual peak demand for June, July, August and September is the billing demand for each respective month. Special emphasis is placed during July and August, as the peak electricity demand registered by the co-op during those two months drives the demand billing for the following "off peak" eight months. Be aware of days when temperatures are forecast to be above 95 degrees. These are the type of days when peak demand can occur.

What are the Benefits of Peak Control?

Reducing electric usage between 3 and 6 p.m. will help reduce our peak load. Each kilowatt shaved or shifted during peak load is a cost savings for all cooperative members.

A Portable Generator Produces as Much CO as a Parking Lot of Cars

Firing up one fuel-powered portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide (CO) as hundreds of combustion-engine cars, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Using a portable generator in a home, garage or too close to an enclosed area is like starting a parking lot full of cars and letting the CO poison seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in minutes.

CO Facts

CO is colorless and odorless. Poisoning can happen so quickly that exposed persons may become unconscious before recognizing any symptoms.

Each Year in the U.S.:

- ▶ Approximately 85 individuals die from CO poisoning.
- ▶ Most deaths (81%) occur in residential locations.

African Americans are at greater risk of CO poisoning, accounting for 23% of generator-related CO deaths, nearly double their estimated 13% share of the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census.

Safety Tips

TO USE A PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFELY:

- ▶ Always use a portable generator at least 20 feet away from your home. Apply the 20-foot distance rule to other locations, such as a shed, cabin, camper, or trailer.
- ▶ Never operate one inside a home, on a porch or near windows and doors.
- ▶ When shopping for a generator,

look for one that gives off reduced emissions.

- ▶ Also look for one that shuts off automatically when high levels of CO are present.
- ▶ Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- ▶ Operate it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool underneath.
- ▶ Ensure CO detectors are installed on every level of your home and near or in bedrooms.
- ▶ Test CO alarms monthly; also track their age. They need to be replaced every seven years.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and movable. A generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator will be able to create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

Besides portable generators, there are also standby generators, which are attached directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

To prevent feeding power back into the power grid and endangering electric line crews and others, standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Never plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system for the same reason.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

SAFETY TIP

If you are considering a home solar array, contact your local electric utility early in the process. Your utility will work with installers to ensure proper and safe connection to the power grid.



SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

National Farm Safety and Health Week, Sept. 17-23

Hearing loss common in farming, can be prevented, effects are cumulative, says K-State Safety experts

BY MADDY ROHR, K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

Natural hearing loss comes with age, but exposure to a loud environment — common in agriculture — can cause noise-induced hearing loss, said a pair of Kansas State University safety experts.

Loud machinery, equipment and even animals can play a role in hearing loss related to farming and ranching, said Brad Dirks, associate director of the K-State physician assistance program.

“Exposure hearing loss can be from a one time experience like a loud concert or using a circular saw without protection,” Dirks said. “Cumulative (hearing loss) can happen over time, like working 40 to 50 years around machinery that push you above the decibel cutoff of 80 to 85.”

For reference, Dirks said people talk at about 60-70 decibels, a movie theater ranges from 75-105 decibels and a motorcycle produces 80-110 decibels.

“How close you are to the noise and how long you’re exposed is very important,” Dirks said.

Tractors with a cab are more muffled compared to those without, and machinery in open spaces will dissipate noise compared to those in enclosed areas. Tractors normally produce 110-120 decibels.

Animals can also cause exposure to hearing loss. Their effect is often overlooked when compared to machinery.

“Pigs squealing can be around 100 decibels, and so prolonged exposure to something like pigs ... in a closed environment can be a problem,” said Tawnie Larson, project coordinator with the Carl and Melinda Helwig Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

She also mentioned the noise from working cattle and calves that are calling back and forth with mothers as being a cause of hearing loss.

Dirks recommends using foam plugs in ears or earmuffs as a preventative measure.

“If you really want to protect your ears, do both; use the foam earplugs and then put the headphones or the earmuffs over and it becomes much more protective in those environments,” he said.

Ear plugs are convenient to keep in pockets and many headphones can be carried around the neck until needed.

“Producers, parents or managers need to think about providing everyone that’s working with them and working on the farm or ranch to have something that can protect their ears,” Larson said.

Youth and babies are also at risk of induced hearing loss and should be provided with appropriate protection at an early age.

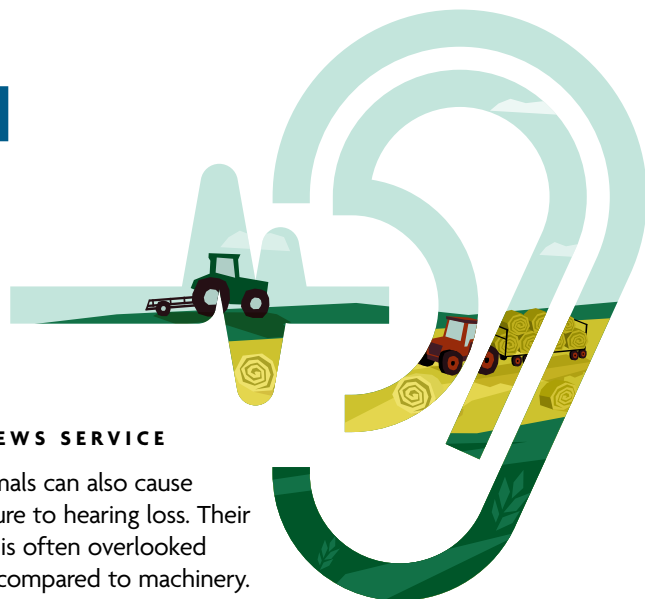
“It’s a cumulative thing, so the younger you start with that noise exposure, the more years you have to be exposed to high noise levels,” Dirks added.

Hearing safety is important because it is permanent, and not something that can be fixed.

“And you can get hearing assistive devices, hearing aids that will amplify (sound), but that vocal range and the high range of those sound waves is gone — and once it’s gone, it’s gone. You can’t bring them back,” Dirks said.

Dirks added that hearing loss can also come from an obstruction in the canal, such as wax or build up. Those can be solved by a doctor.

“(Hearing loss) is preventable,” Larson said. “You can turn it down, walk away, or you can wear hearing protection. (Protection) is pretty easy to find at any hardware store.”



NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

**READY.
SET.
REGISTER.**

9-19-2023

CO-OPS VOTE

132 CHILDREN PARTICIPATE in Co-op-Sponsored Pedal Pull

This year, 132 children participated in the pedal tractor pull at the Sedgwick County Fair with the top three winners in each age group qualifying to compete at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson on Sept. 10.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative would like to thank everyone who watched or participated. We would also like to thank Border States Electric, Bolinger & DeVore Farms LLC, DeVore Cattle LLC and Killco Appliance Repair for their prize donations. Congratulations to the 2023 pedal tractor pull winners!



Lineman Tommy Hill's son, Levi, pulls in the 5-year-old bracket.



IT Manager Andy Riggs' son, Callen, pulls in the 9-year-old bracket.



This pedal puller is determined to make a full pull!



Knox Hillman participated in the 5-year-old bracket.

