



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

currentnews

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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FROM THE MANAGER

Headline

Dear Member-Owners,

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by the coronavirus, I want to assure you that your local electric cooperative is here to help you. We have always had an emergency plan that has served us well in a variety of circumstances, from ice storms to tornadoes to flash floods. Early in this crisis, our staff updated that plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the reliable electric service you have come to expect from your electric cooperative.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is the No. 1 thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in mind, keeping the power flowing is Job 1 for everyone involved in maintaining the electric cooperative system.

That starts with our generation cooperative, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), which has taken extreme measures to ensure its workforce is healthy and its power plants are functioning as needed. It extends to the 18 cooperatives that wheel that electricity across Kansas, and it includes Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative where business may be a bit unusual, but our service remains the same.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we have taken in order to keep your power flowing. We've closed our lobby to prevent the spread of germs. Instead, we are encouraging members to use the following payment options:

- ▶ Automatic Payment
- ▶ U.S. Postal Service
- ▶ Drop Box
- ▶ Online with SmartHub
- ▶ Pay by Phone
- ▶ Online with your Bank



Scott Ayres

Many of our employees are working from home. We've divided departments into shifts so they can practice social distancing even when in the office. If you call, the phones will be answered as always.

We have separated our line crews from other employees and even from each other to limit possible spread of the virus. New routines are in place for contractors working on our system in order to keep them away from employees. Deliveries are being quarantined.

Our management team and board of directors are meeting constantly to fine-tune this plan. We are in constant contact with the other electric cooperatives in Kansas and with Kansas

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4 COMMON CULPRITS OF ELECTRICAL FIRES

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires. Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Loose, damaged or worn-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.



ELECTRICAL WIRING

Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. Homes older than 20 years may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, contact a qualified electrician.



OVERLOADED CIRCUIT AND OUTLETS

Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, computer and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.



OLD APPLIANCES

Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.



Cooperative Moves Forward with Electronic Staking/Mapping

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is implementing a geographical information system (GIS) to better serve our members. GIS is a digital mapping system that will give us detailed information regarding our electrical network. Among other benefits, GIS will help us restore your power more efficiently during outages.

To create our GIS system, we must do a field inventory. This calls for physically visiting and recording information about every pole and meter on our network.

Starting very soon, you may notice extra crews in our St. Marks Substation service area carrying hand-held computers, cameras, and GPS devices. They will be looking at utility poles, street lights, transformers and other Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative equipment in your neighborhood.

"They are here to conduct an inventory of our electrical system and record the location, condition, and photograph each piece of equipment using special GPS tools," said Kyle Pipkin, Line Superintendent for Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative.

These tools are very similar to GPS units you may be familiar with, but they are much more accurate. The information will be stored in an electronic map called a Geospatial Information System (GIS). Having this type of data

will greatly improve our response to outages and improve service to our members in many other ways.

Accurate maps are an important part of the co-op's toolkit. With these maps, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative can plot power lines, locate problems more quickly, and plan for future growth.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative has grown rapidly through the years, and the maps that have been developed over the last 75 years are not always accurate. While Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative has been using geographic information maps, this project will allow the GIS maps to be corrected and have the same accuracy as GPS.

"The ultimate goal of the project is replace the co-op's old, inaccurate database with a new, accurate database."

The folks you will be seeing are experts with the RMA Engineering, an industry leader in this field. Their pickups and 4-wheelers will be branded with Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative logo for identification.

As they move through our service area, we will provide updates to keep you informed of their work locations. Should you have any questions please contact us at 316-542-3131 or toll free 866-542-4732 or visit our website at www.sedgwickcountyelectric.coop.

Summer Line Crew Hours

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative's line crew began working summer hours, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., on May 1 and will continue through Sept. 30. Each year during this period, the Line Department switches to summer hours in an effort to complete most of the day's work before the major heat of the day arrives. The office will retain our normal business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have questions or need to report an outage during regular business hours, please call



caption

316-542-3131 or 866-542-4732. To report an after hour's outage, please call 316-542-3131. Your call will be handled by our dispatch service, Cooperative Response Center (CRC).

Headline

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Electric Cooperatives, Inc., which in turn is working closely with our national association, the state legislature, Gov. Laura Kelly.

So far, it is working well and everyone has adapted to the new norm. Nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation. It's kind of like gold that has been tested in fire — stronger and more beautiful!

Electric Co-ops are Contributing to a Smarter Grid

It's a familiar scene: poles and wires stretching into the distance alongside a rural highway. This image might appear no different now than it did many years ago. But look more closely.

Invisible to most of us is an overlay of new equipment — chips, sensors and fiber — linking remote distribution infrastructure to the utility's operations center using advanced communications technology.

Those iconic poles and wires are now part of a "smart grid" that can be operated using software and automation.

For electric cooperatives, "digitalization" of electric infrastructure kicked into high gear in 2013 when the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) funded new technology research at 23 electric co-ops across the country. That partnership has now evolved into a robust research program exploring everything from drones and smart solar inverters to cybersecurity training and carbon capture technology.

Here are some of the ways co-op member-owners are already benefiting from a smarter grid:

- ▶ Fewer power outages. In certain situations, smart feeder switching can re-route power around problems such as downed power lines, which reduces the number of people affected by an outage.
- ▶ Pre-pay programs. Some co-op pre-pay billing programs no longer impose hefty reconnection fees because, thanks to advanced digital meters, the co-op doesn't need to send out a truck to physically reconnect the home.
- ▶ Cost savings from increased efficiency. Many of the new technologies are improving the efficiency of co-op operations — from

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, stay home and we will get through this together the cooperative way!

reducing the amount of electricity lost in transmission to reducing the need for sending out trucks. These cost savings are passed on to co-op members.

- ▶ Improved safety for co-op workers and members. The data from smart technologies provide utility operators a more detailed view of what is happening on the electric system. Co-ops have found that the data can help them identify electrical hazards faster.

The research partnership between electric cooperatives and the DOE, including the national laboratories, has enabled co-ops nationwide to increase their total solar energy capacity, install cutting-edge batteries for energy storage and microgrids, develop data analytics tools and find new ways to capture emissions from coal and natural gas power plants.

This partnership gives electric co-ops in some of the most remote regions of the country access to an amazing network of researchers, including researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, Purdue University and the University of California at Berkeley, to name a few.

In exchange, the researchers can see how these new technologies operate in the real-world.

So, the next time you are driving down a long highway and you see poles and wires stretching into the far distance, know there's more to that system than meets the eye. While the electricity in your home powers the toaster just as it always did, that electricity is more efficient, more reliable and safer thanks to innovation made possible by cooperation.

IT CAN WAIT

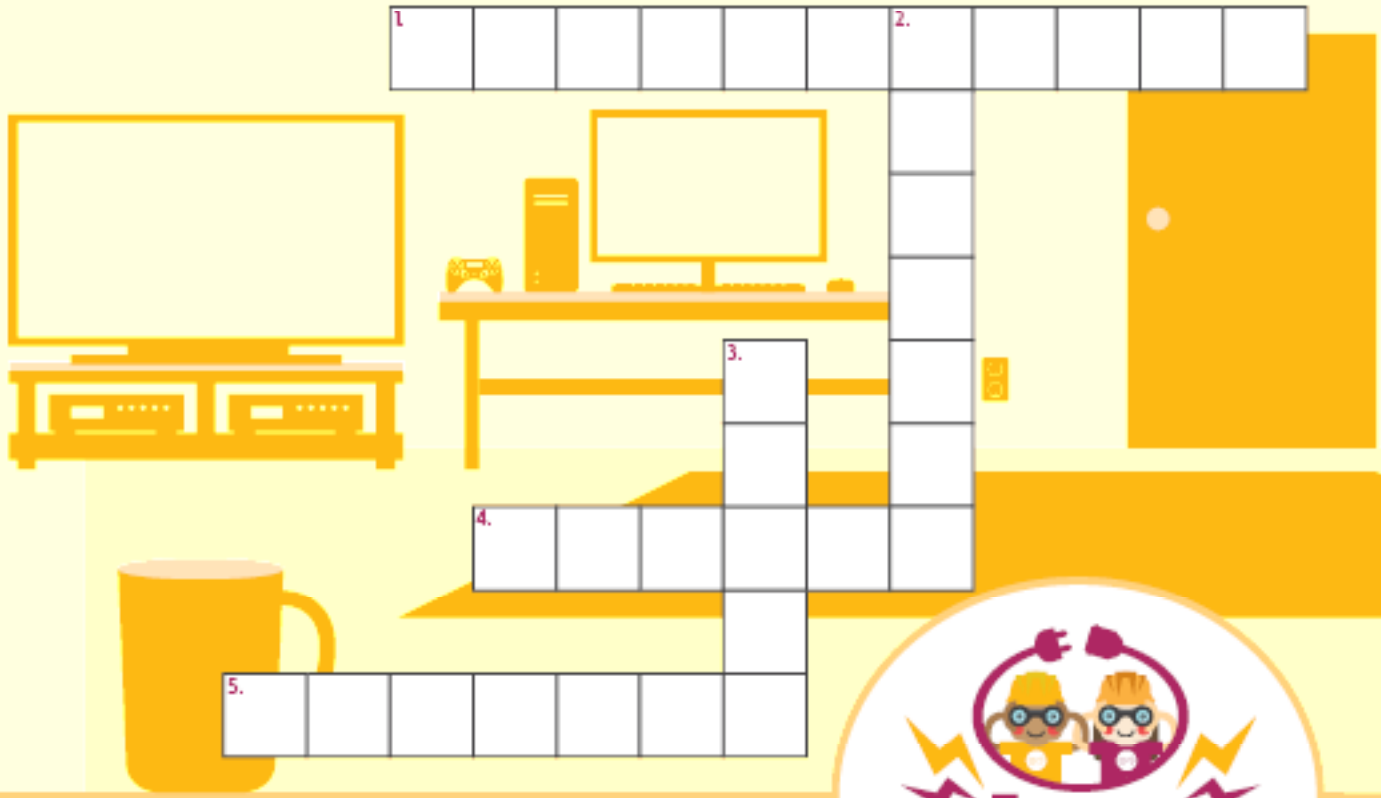
AVOID ALL DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Our crews often work roadside. Please pay attention when approaching a work zone and respect and obey orange work zone signs. Slow down, move over, and follow any other instructions when approaching and moving through a work zone.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- ▶ **9%** of fatal crashes in 2017 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- ▶ In 2017, there were **3,166 people** killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
- ▶ **6%** of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes.
- ▶ Ages **15-19** have the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the fatal crashes.
- ▶ In 2017, **599 pedestrians, bicyclists and others** were killed in distraction-affected crashes.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



May is Electrical Safety Month!

Read the safety tips below to complete the crossword puzzle.

1. **ACROSS:** Keep all liquids away from _____, like TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
2. **DOWN:** Never overload electrical _____. This creates a greater risk of fire.
3. **DOWN:** Never use electrical _____ that feel warm to the touch or are damaged in any way.
4. **ACROSS:** Smoke _____ should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
5. **ACROSS:** Don't run electrical cords under rugs. This creates potential fire _____.

1 to 8 across 2, 4 to 5 3, cord 4 items 5, hazards

ANSWER KEY