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316-542-3131 or 866-542-4732  
www.sedgwickcountyelectric.coop



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

**SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# currentnews

## Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Tree Trimming Improves Service for All

One of the things I love best about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade, and a habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative, we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights of way (ROW).

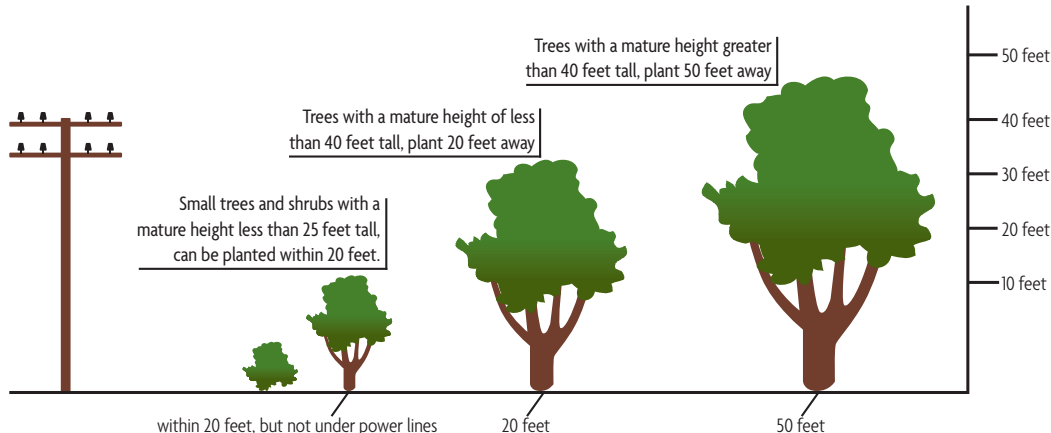
While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW areas. However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a "right of way" is and how it may impact you. A right of way is the

land we use to construct, maintain, replace, or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights of way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance, or operation. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our



Scott Ayres

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## 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 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).

## Tree Trimming Improves Service for All *Continued from page 16A*

community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

### Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

We also want to ensure member safety by completing the tree trimming near power lines by using OSHA-certified tree trimmers. Trimming tree limbs near power lines is a dangerous job and has many hazards. We do not want our members attempting to trim any limbs near power lines.

### Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of

a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and our technology to maximize the efficiency of our operation. This includes our vegetation management plan.

### Affordability

As you know, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

## Think Before You Climb Steps to Ladder Safety

Before you use a ladder, take precautions.

Sources: OSHA, American Ladder Institute

### Electrical Safety







- ▶ **Look up** and around for power line locations before using a ladder.
- ▶ Keep a minimum **10-foot distance** from a power line or other electrical equipment at all times.
- ▶ The minimum distance rule includes you (any part of your body) or **any object you are holding**, such as a ladder or tool.
- ▶ Always **be aware of power line locations** when you are elevated.
- ▶ Sources of elevation include, but are not limited to, a **ladder, rooftop, boom lift or scaffolding**.

### General Ladder Safety

- 1 Use a ladder on a **stable, level surface**.
- 2 Maintain **three-point contact** on the ladder when climbing and at all times.
- 3 Three points of contact means **two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand**.
- 4 Keep your body **near the middle of the step** and face the ladder when climbing.
- 5 **Do not use the top step**/rung of a ladder unless designed for that purpose.
- 6 For a stepladder, make sure the base is **fully open** and the spreaders are **locked**.



# Improving Your Yard? Know What's Above and Below Before You Start

1	2	3	4	5	
NOTIFY	WAIT	CONFIRM	RESPECT	DIG CAREFULLY	
					
<p><b>Starting a new project? Follow 5 steps for safe digging.</b></p>	<p>Call 811 or make a request online two to three days before you plan to start your project.</p>	<p>Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will mark underground lines.</p>	<p>Confirm all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.</p>	<p>Respect the markers and use them as a guide for the duration of your project.</p>	<p>If you can't avoid digging near the provided markers (within 24 inches on all sides according to Kansas law), consider moving your project.</p>
<p><b>NOTE</b> 811 does not mark privately owned utility lines, invisible fences or sprinkler systems. <b>Call a private utility locator for these.</b></p>					

When the temperature warms to signal the arrival of spring, many of us begin planning improvements to our outdoor spaces. This could include adding or maintaining a swimming pool, building a deck, adding a patio or assembling play equipment for your family to enjoy. However, it is important to plan for safety prior to adding an outdoor structure or improving your yard.

## Power Line Awareness

Being aware of power line locations near your home is vitally important for you and your family's safety. Even drop-down lines — the lines that bring power to a home — have voltages running through them and can be dangerous. Always look up and around for power lines, while also recognizing electricity can jump or transfer even without direct contact. Also know what's below before starting any digging job.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity urge you to consider the following before working in your yard:

- ▶ Assume all power lines are always energized and keep at least 10 feet between a power line and you or any item you are holding.
- ▶ Perform a hazard assessment of the work area, noting all power line locations.
- ▶ Call 811 or your state's underground utility locator service to mark underground utilities as part of planning and before any digging. The service is free.
- ▶ Utility locators do not mark private lines, however. Private lines need to be marked by an independent locating service. Private underground lines — typically installed by the homeowner or a contractor — include, but are not limited to:
  - Lines that service outbuildings (electric, gas, water, communication).

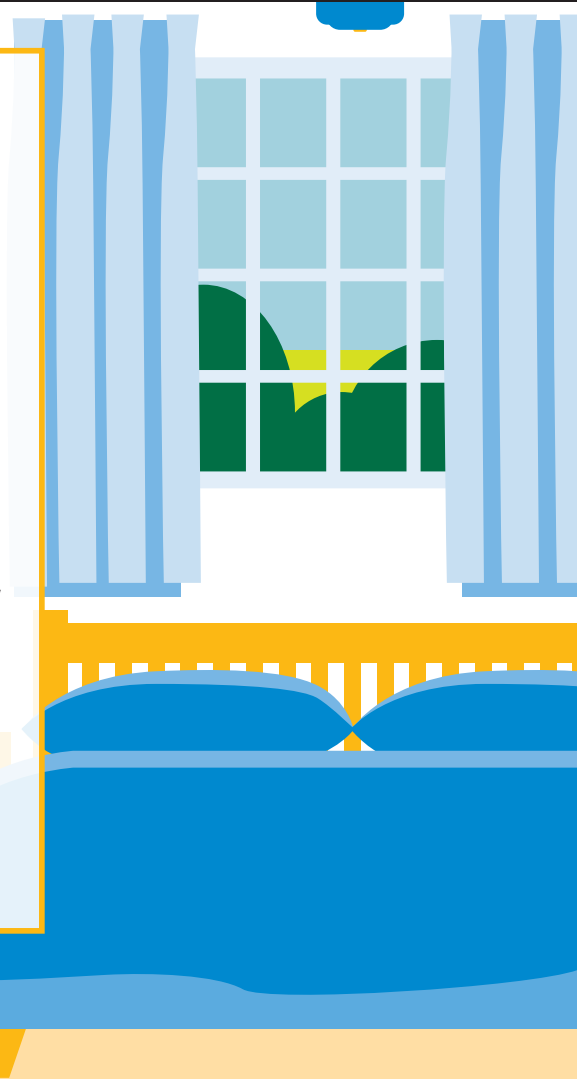
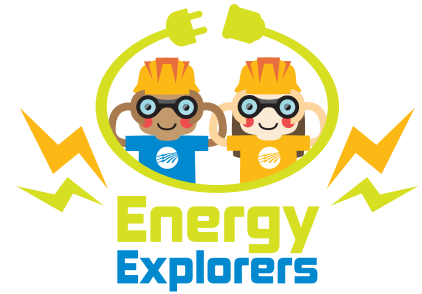
- Irrigation or septic system lines.
- Lines between the meter and your home.
- Lines to other outdoor items like grills or hot tubs.
- ▶ Once underground utilities are marked, the 811 "Call Before You Dig" service recommends that the area within 18 to 24 inches of either side of the marked lines be dug by hand with a fiberglass-handled shovel, not by machine.
- ▶ Do not install tree houses, playsets or swing sets, pools or decks and any associated structures within 25 feet of a power line. Consider the height and reach of play equipment (including the arc of a swing) and all deck and pool structures in relation to power lines.
- ▶ Educate your children about power line safety and how electricity can jump. Teach them to never touch a power line or get too close to one — either directly or with a toy or object — before sending them outside to play. This is especially important if they climb trees, fly kites or use remote-control (RC) devices, such as an RC airplane or drone.
- ▶ Use extreme caution when moving ladders and operating long-handled tools, such as pool skimmers, around trees and power lines.
- ▶ Also use extreme caution and look up and around for power lines when you are elevated, whether it be on a ladder, a boom lift, scaffolding or your roof.
- ▶ When planting and trimming trees, keep in mind that specialized tree trimming experts certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in utility clearance are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.
 

Please contact us with questions about specific power line clearance recommendations concerning decks, pools and play structures in your yard.

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH WORD SEARCH

May is Electrical Safety Month!

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle all the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



## WORD BANK

- ▶ Do not use any electrical **cords** that feel warm to the touch or are **damaged** in any way.
- ▶ Remind parents or adults in your home to test **smoke alarms** every month. Alarms should be installed in every **bedroom**, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- ▶ Do not overload electrical **outlets**. Overloading creates a potential fire **hazard**.
- ▶ Keep all **liquids** away from **electronics**, including TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
- ▶ Do not run **electrical** cords under rugs or carpet. This creates a **fire risk**.