PRAIRIE LAND Electric Cooperative, Inc.

P.O. Box 360, 14935 U.S. Highway 36, Norton, KS 67654
785-877-3323 or 800-577-3323
www.prairielandelectric.com

PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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POWER LINE ISSUES

Call 800-577-3323 to report outages and other power line issues.

POWER *to make life better*

FROM THE CEO

Power You Can Count On

What it takes to keep life moving

Think about the first few hours of your day.

Maybe you turn on the kitchen light and start the coffee. The furnace or air conditioner keeps your home comfortable while you get ready. A well pump supplies water. Out on the farm, equipment is already running. At a local business, computers come on, coolers stay cold, and the doors open for another day.

Like most of us, you probably also pay closer attention today to what all those everyday necessities cost. Groceries, insurance, fuel, equipment, repairs — there aren't many places where rising costs haven't been felt.

Electricity is another household or business expense, and we know what you pay for it matters, but **SO DOES WHAT YOU RECEIVE IN RETURN.** With the proposed rate change, average monthly small commercial and residential bills are projected to increase by roughly $14, bringing the respective averages to approximately $128 and $149, although actual bills will vary based on service and electricity use. **THAT'S ROUGHLY $4 TO $5 A DAY** for electricity that powers nearly every part of daily life and business.



Kirk Girard

When you flip a switch, you need the power to be there. And when you pay your electric bill, you deserve to know we're working to balance reliable service with responsible decisions about the system that provides it.

Long before electricity reaches your home, farm or business, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation (Sunflower), our generation and transmission provider, works to procure the electricity needed to serve its member

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Power You Can Count On

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cooperatives and move power across the high-voltage transmission system to local substations. From there, Prairie Land delivers it across our local distribution system to you.

For Prairie Land, that means maintaining nearly 7,000 miles of line serving approximately 24,500 meters across north central and northwest Kansas. In our rural territory, that's only about 3.5 meters for every mile of line.

WHY DOES THAT MATTER TO YOU?

Reliable service depends on a resilient system that can respond when problems occur. Poles and wires must be maintained. Substations and equipment have to work together so we can limit the impact of an outage and, where possible, keep power flowing to more members. Materials must be available when something breaks. Employees have to be trained and ready to respond — whether it's an ordinary Tuesday afternoon or the middle of a winter storm.

Most of that work happens without you ever seeing it. And that's a good thing.

BALANCING COST, RELIABILITY AND LONG-TERM VALUE

We know electric bills matter to household budgets and local businesses. That's why financial stewardship is an important part of every decision we make.

Prairie Land's last base-rate increase was implemented in January 2024. While that may not seem very long ago, we have all felt the effects of rising costs over the past couple of years, and Prairie Land is no exception. The 2027 proposed rates are designed to generate a **6.1% OVERALL INCREASE IN RATE REVENUE.** Spread across the three years since the last increase, that equates to about 2% per year overall, although the impact varies by rate class. That longer-term perspective reflects the work happening between rate changes to manage costs while continuing to maintain the electric system our members depend on.

Some of the costs required to provide electric service are largely outside our control. That includes costs associated with the wholesale power we purchase from Sunflower, which accounts for approximately 58 cents of every dollar on Prairie Land's electric bills, as well as rising costs for materials, labor and equipment, supply-chain conditions, and state and local taxes and fees.

Our responsibility is to focus on what we can control: **PLAN CAREFULLY, PRIORITIZE WISELY, AND WEIGH COST ALONGSIDE SAFETY, RELIABILITY AND LONG-TERM VALUE.**

Being cost-conscious doesn't always mean choosing the lowest-cost option. Sometimes maintaining what we already have is the best value. Sometimes strategically upgrading one part of the system can avoid the need for a larger investment elsewhere. And sometimes spending more upfront on longer-lasting equipment can reduce maintenance and replacement costs over its useful life.

As aging substations are evaluated, for example, upgrading every facility isn't automatically the answer. In some cases, strategically modernizing one substation can provide enough capacity to support neighboring substations while existing facilities remain available for backup.

We also evaluate materials based on how long they are expected to last and how they perform. Fiberglass crossarms may cost somewhat more initially than traditional wood but can offer longer service life and added strength in severe weather.

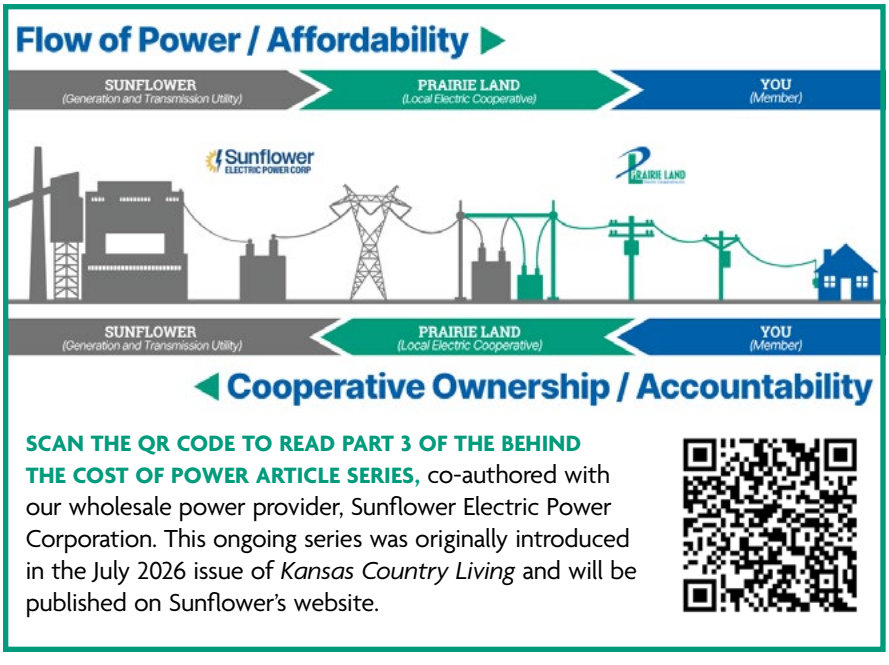
And when outside funding is available, we pursue it. Prairie Land has used Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation funding for system improvements, helping offset costs that otherwise would have to be borne by the cooperative and its members.

Different situations call for different solutions, but the question behind them is the same: **WHAT CHOICE PROVIDES THE BEST LONG-TERM VALUE FOR THE PEOPLE WE SERVE?**

KEEPING THE POWER THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT

Those decisions ultimately come back to the service you depend on.

Reliable service isn't only about how quickly we respond after the lights go out. Some of the most valuable



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ PART 3 OF THE BEHIND THE COST OF POWER ARTICLE SERIES, co-authored with our wholesale power provider, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. This ongoing series was originally introduced in the July 2026 issue of *Kansas Country Living* and will be published on Sunflower's website.

work we do happens before an outage ever occurs.

We inspect equipment, maintain poles and lines, address aging infrastructure and look for weaknesses before they become bigger problems. We also invest in technology where it can help us operate the system more effectively.

One example is Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) technology. It gives our operations team real-time visibility into parts of the electric system, helping us detect outages faster, pinpoint problems more accurately and restore service more efficiently. Prairie Land is also strengthening tie lines, upgrading protective equipment in substations, and modernizing aging infrastructure where it provides the greatest benefit.

Sunflower takes a similar approach with the generation and transmission system that supplies our power, using inspections and targeted maintenance to identify potential problems early and extend the useful life of existing infrastructure where it makes sense.

FOR YOU, THE BENEFIT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD: FEWER AND SHORTER OUTAGES WHERE POSSIBLE, FEWER MEMBERS AFFECTED WHEN PROBLEMS OCCUR, AND A SYSTEM THAT CAN RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY.

In 2025, Prairie Land's system achieved 99.9% reliability. Reliability isn't something we take for granted; it requires careful planning, disciplined investment, and accountability throughout the organization.

Of course, even the best-maintained system can't prevent every outage. During the March 2025 storm, crews persevered through the blizzard and challenging driving conditions, replacing nearly 160 poles, while office staff worked to coordinate efforts and keep members informed. The storm caused approximately $1 million in damage. It's a reminder that resilience is also about being prepared to respond and recover when problems occur.

A SYSTEM THAT BELONGS TO YOU

Prairie Land is a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative. Margins are not about generating profit for shareholders — they help maintain financial strength, meet lender requirements, reinvest in our system, and ultimately return value to our members.

In 2025, the board of trustees authorized a general retirement of capital credits, including retired patronage capital received from Sunflower, returning $2.65 million in capital credits to our members.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU?

We know electricity is an important part of your household or business budget. We also know reliable power isn't optional for the homes, farms and businesses we serve.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BALANCE BOTH REALITIES.

We can't prevent every outage, and we can't control every cost that affects your electric service. What we can do is plan carefully, invest responsibly and remain disciplined about the decisions that are ours to make.

Tomorrow morning, when the lights come on, the coffee starts brewing and another ordinary day gets underway, our goal is simple: **TO PROVIDE POWER YOU CAN COUNT ON WHILE MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS WITH THE MEMBERS WE SERVE IN MIND.**

That's the responsibility that comes with being **YOUR COOPERATIVE.**





Why every step matters near a downed power line

When a downed power line touches the ground, electricity can spread out like ripples on a pond.

If your feet touch two different voltage levels, electricity can move through your body.

That is step potential, and it can be deadly.

IF YOU SEE A DOWNED POWER LINE:

- **STOP.** Keep yourself and others at least 50 feet away.
- **CALL 911.** Report it and wait for help.
- **NEVER TOUCH THE LINE** or anything it touches, including fences, vehicles, trees, equipment or people.

IF YOU ARE NEAR A DOWNED LINE, DO NOT WALK OR RUN AWAY:

- **SHUFFLE TO SAFETY.** Keep feet close together and on the ground.
- **HOP AWAY.** Keep feet together; hop and land together.

Downed lines can be silent, still and deadly. Stay away and call 911.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

2027 Trustee Election Process

The cooperative's bylaws anticipate for the following positions to be filled in the 2027 trustee election:

- **DISTRICT 2 –** Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties. **ERIC WITMER** of Phillipsburg currently holds this position.
- **DISTRICT 3 –** Sheridan, Graham and Rooks counties. **ROBERT PAXSON** of Penokee is not seeking re-election.
- **DISTRICT 4 –** Smith, Jewell, Osborne and Mitchell counties. This position is currently open (formerly held by **OTTO LEVIN**).
- **DISTRICT 5 –** Republic, Washington, Cloud and Clay counties. **WILLIAM PETERSON** of Clifton currently holds this position.

A nominating committee has been appointed to meet and nominate candidates for these positions. If you are interested in being nominated for one of the positions, contact a member of the committee to discuss your nomination.

The committee will meet at 12:30 p.m. on Dec. 4, 2026, at the Prairie Land Electric office at 14935 U.S. Highway 36 in Norton. (A secondary date of Dec. 8, 2026, has been set in case the meeting is postponed due to inclement weather).

Nominations may also be made by petition. Interested candidates should contact the Norton office to request the appropriate form. The petition must be signed by no less than 25 members of the district for whom the trustee is to be elected. Petitions need to be delivered to the Norton office by **4:30 P.M. ON JAN. 11, 2027.**

All nominations shall be posted in the Norton office. The election shall be conducted on an "at large" basis; therefore, every member of Prairie Land Electric Cooperative is eligible to vote for all positions in the election.

Upon completion of the nominating process, voting materials will be mailed to Prairie Land members **BY JAN. 25, 2027.** The bylaws require the use of mail ballots for trustee elections. Ballots and a postage-paid return envelope will be furnished for the member to use.

BALLOTS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE NORTON OFFICE BY 4:30 P.M. ON FEB. 10, 2027. An election and credentials committee will count the ballots **BY FEB. 20, 2027,** and the election results will then be announced to members.

If you have questions regarding this year's election, please call the Prairie Land office in Norton at 785-877-3323 or 800-577-3323.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- **ROGER ZWEYGARDT**
  St. Francis, 785-332-8253
- **STEPHEN WASHBURN**
  Norton, 785-202-0338
- **RODNEY BELLEAU**
  Hill City, 785-421-8149
- **RON MORGAN**
  Smith Center, 785-620-7665
- **JERRY STENBERG**
  Clyde, 785-243-0129





CONTACT PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE FOR MORE INFORMATION