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785-877-3323 or 800-577-3323
www.prairielandelectric.com

PRAIRIE LAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

PRAIRIE LAND NEWS

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

POWER
to make life better

2022 in Review

Excerpt from the 2022 Annual Report

Kirk Girard

What is normal? Normal can be defined as any behavior or condition that is usual, expected, typical or conforms to a pre-existing standard. But after the past several years with COVID-19, Winter Storm Uri, supply chain issues, labor shortages and high inflation, what does the usual, expected, typical or pre-existing standard look like? We live in a time of constant change and abnormality, which seems to be the "new" normal.

Like most of our members, Prairie Land has been subject to constant challenges in obtaining goods — in our case the very pieces of equipment we need to serve our members. Lead times on utility trucks have gone from 6-12 months to 2-3 years. Common class wood poles have seen unprecedented demand across the country, making the delivery of a standard wood pole difficult. Wire, hardware, line materials and transformers have doubled in lead times, and all have significantly increased in pricing. In some cases, costs have increased 200% over what we paid just a few years ago.

As our supply chain has tightened, the demand for electricity continues to increase, not only within our region but across the country, putting a strain on our power grid. Our regional transmission organization, the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), coordinates, controls and monitors the electric grid across our region. Their biggest challenge is meeting the needs of our members during extremely high demand for energy, whether it be in the dog days of summer or the dead cold of winter. At the same time, we see power plants being shut down across the country faster than new plants are being built. In most cases, traditional large-scale power suppliers such as coal

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Gary Beikman
30 years

Beikman Completes 30 Years of Service

GARY BEIKMAN is a construction foreman out of the Norton headquarters. He started as a lineman on April 1, 1989, advanced to crew foreman in 2000, then took a two-year hiatus to do linework near Burlington, Kansas, before returning to Prairie Land in 2004.

Beikman was raised in Linn, Kansas, and completed his lineworker training at Manhattan Area Technical College.

Beikman and his wife, Regina, have two daughters, Lilly and LeAnne. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and spending time with family.

Our lineworkers gave high-voltage safety demonstrations for Ag Safety Day on Feb. 21 at the Phillipsburg fairgrounds, reaching 140 third and fourth graders and their teachers from Phillipsburg, Logan and Thunder Ridge.

Skylar Kahrs
Clifton

Erin Schmitt
Beloit

Layton Johnson
Phillipsburg

Arabella Wernecke
Clifton

Youth Tour/Leadership Camp Winners

Prairie Land has a long tradition of sponsoring high school juniors for all-expense-paid trips designed to enrich their leadership potential. Students have benefited from leadership camps in Colorado, youth tours in Washington, D.C., a KEY leadership conference in Topeka and scholarships.

The youth tour to Washington, D.C., is back, and will take place June 15-22, 2023. Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, is July 14-20, 2023.

The competitors interviewed at the Concordia office on Feb. 5, or the Norton office on Feb. 12.

Our winners are pictured above. **SKYLAR KAHRS** and **ARABELLA WERNECKE,** both of Clifton will attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. **ERIN SCHMITT** of Beloit and **LAYTON JOHNSON** of Phillipsburg chose to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

This is an outstanding opportunity for these students to network with other young leaders, learn about electric cooperatives, practice some engineering and watch our government in action. Congratulations to these impressive young leaders!

Retired Capital Credits were recently mailed out, and our member service representatives have been busy going through the returned mail and working to locate former members and get the current address.

Members may continue to receive capital credit information and disbursements for decades after leaving the territory. When you make sure we always have current contact information, it makes our job of returning your capital in the cooperative much easier.

2022 in Review

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and nuclear plants are being closed and replaced by alternatives that operate on a much smaller scale.

Electricity, as well as the fuel that generates it, is a commodity that is affected by supply and demand economics. This past summer, extremely hot weather conditions caused a greater demand for electricity. In fact, on July 19, the SPP region experienced a record high demand for energy.

When demand increases, the electric grid requires less efficient power plants to operate along with the more efficient baseload plants that normally serve the load to meet consumer needs. The combination of less efficient power generation and higher fuel prices to power the generation leads to higher prices for electricity. This, in turn, is passed on to the Prairie Land member.

How does Prairie Land mitigate the ramifications of market fluctuations in the cost of energy? In short, Sunflower Electric, our generation and transmission provider, utilizes generation fuel diversity and various hedging products to help protect our members from even higher energy prices. Sunflower's coal-based unit at Holcomb Station generates energy at a lower cost than natural gas, providing a significant hedge for its members. Sunflower also recently added 20 MW of solar generation through the Johnson Corner Solar Project. Stable-priced solar energy helps moderate electricity prices during the sunniest and hottest parts of the summer when electricity demand is at its highest. Sunflower is pursuing additional solar energy projects to further control the impact of summer energy prices and hedge them in the future.

Further changes are sure to come. Last year, there were record increases in electric vehicle (EV) sales, and experts are predicting that by 2035 many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models. The need for more electricity will have a major impact on the nation's grid, which means power supply and grid infrastructure must be carefully planned to accommodate the increased need for electricity.

EV charging presents new challenges in maintaining the electric grid. Fully charging an EV battery requires the same amount of electricity needed to power a home during peak energy use times. However, EV charging is a concentrated pull of energy over an extended period, which can add stress to the local power grid by increasing the amount of electricity a utility has to provide. Prairie Land is currently identifying ways to manage this new pattern of electricity use, though those exact strategies will vary based on the market penetration of EVs in each area.

While everyone is experiencing these challenges, Prairie Land is committed to ensuring the lights stay on and continuing to provide quality service to our members. However, we can't stop Mother Nature from doing what she does, and we can't change the principle of supply and demand. But, through adversity, we will strive to be your trusted energy resource, providing safe and reliable energy services to deliver the power to improve the lives of our members and communities.

REMEMBER TO LOOK UP
WHEN OPERATING LARGE EQUIPMENT

Millions of workers operate large equipment every day. Examples include cranes, dump trucks, farm equipment, bucket trucks, hydraulic lifts and cement trucks. If the equipment you are operating raises or extends, make sure you follow OSHA's rules for the minimum approach distance to power lines.

- **IF YOU PLAN TO WORK WITHIN 20 FEET OF A POWER LINE,** contact the electric utility in advance to deenergize the line. On the farm, examples include loading, unloading or moving/relocating a grain bin within 20 feet of an overhead line.
- **ALWAYS USE A SPOTTER NEAR OVERHEAD POWER LINES.** A spotter's view from the ground provides a better vantage point than what you can see from the cab.
- **IF YOUR EQUIPMENT TOUCHES A POWER LINE OR UTILITY POLE,** stay in the cab, call for help and alert others to stay away until utility crews deenergize the power. Only exit the cab if it's on fire and do so by jumping clear, landing with both feet together and hopping away with feet together.
- **DO NOT OPERATE A HYDRAULIC/SCISSOR LIFT NEAR AN OVERHEAD POWER LINE.**

LEARN MORE AT SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

2022 Project Update

Excerpt from the 2022 Annual Report

In late 2021, Prairie Land began working with Summit Sustainable Ingredients on their expansion project at the former Prairie Horizon Agri-Energy corn ethanol plant in Phillipsburg. The newly-named Amber Wave project is transforming the operations of the current plant to include wheat processing, vital wheat gluten extraction, and low-carbon fuel production. The transition from corn ethanol to wheat processing will provide significant economic development to the area by adding around 50 good-paying jobs, enhancing domestic food product development and generating low-carbon fuel.

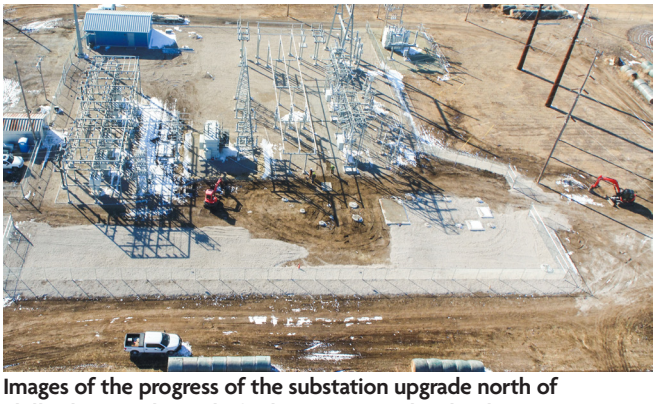
The Amber Wave project requires more than four times the power capacity they had previously used. In addition, upgrades to both the ethanol plant substation and the Phillipsburg 115 kV substation would be required to meet these needs with a total project cost of just over $1.5 million. To help fund the project, Prairie Land applied for a Building a Stronger Economy (BASE) grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce. In April 2022, we were awarded $1,130,490, leaving an investment match of $406,326 to be provided by Prairie Land. Any time Prairie Land can add new baseload to our system, our members, systemwide, benefit because the fixed cost associated with providing electric service is spread over more kWh sales.

Another important project is the completion of work to rebuild portions of our system damaged by the April 2017 ice and snowstorm in Decatur, Graham, Norton, Sheridan and Rawlins counties, causing over $4.7 million in damages. Of the more than 300 miles of line that were damaged, 89 qualified for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster relief. Crews completed the work to rebuild the damaged lines in June 2022.

As we were finishing up our FEMA 2017 storm damage, another ice and snow storm hit Phillips, Rooks and Graham counties on March 22, 2022. Prairie Land crews worked through that evening, restoring power to all but 800-900 of our members. Crews spent the next day continuing repairs, and all residential services were restored by 6:30 p.m. Most other services were restored the following day.

What happens when the ice gets on power lines? The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, much like an airplane wing. This produces a change in airflow which causes the line to bounce or "gallop." Galloping lines can cause wires to eventually touch, resulting in a fault or subsequent power outage. The increased movement can also cause cross-arms to break, bringing lines to the ground.

While extreme weather events can wreak havoc on our system, with resiliency and reliability at the core of our mission and strategic planning initiatives, we will continue to invest in our distribution system.



Images of the progress of the substation upgrade north of Phillipsburg at the end of February were taken by drone.

Do your part to help everyone return home safely.
THE ORANGE SIGN IS MEANT FOR EVERYONE.

IT'S NOT A SUGGESTION. IT'S THE LAW.

Life is fast paced, but speeding or multitasking in a work zone is not worth losing your life or taking someone else's.

To help save lives and reduce injuries, follow orange sign directives every time you approach a work zone.

2020 Work Zone Statistics*

CRASHES AND INJURIES

102,000
Estimated total crashes

44,000
Estimated injuries

FATALITIES

857 Total fatalities

244 Fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES IN WORK ZONES

105
Pedestrians (non-workers)

51 Pedestrian workers

*MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE

SOURCES: NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK (NWZAW.ORG), NATIONAL WORK ZONE SAFETY INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE, AMERICAN TRAFFIC SAFETY SERVICES ASSOCIATION