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PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Power Line Issues

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

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative,
Inc. is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.

FROM THE CEO

Why We Love Serving Our Members

Valentine's Day is the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them. With that in mind, we've created the top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.

We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible and safe electricity. Simply put, Prairie Land Electric exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1938 — to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

1 YOU ENABLE US TO COMPLETE OUR MISSION BY SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS TO GIVE BACK. A major part of our mission is to serve our community and look after the greater good. With your assistance, we're able to help local communities hang up holiday decorations and provide help for local projects and events. Our employees inspire us with their generosity of time and donations to food and toy drives that serve the most vulnerable members of our community.

2 MEMBERS OF OUR CO-OP ALSO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-

term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

3 YOU HELP US GET IT RIGHT. PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC

MEMBERS ARE GREAT ABOUT

KEEPING US IN THE KNOW. We

do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball; our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees.

4 YOU AND OTHER PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC MEMBERS MAKE UP

THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE — AND FOR US, IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY.

Our employees live and work here too and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help our area thrive. It's also why we support economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.



Kirk Girard

Prevent DIY Disaster

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster. Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

- ▶ **WEAR SAFETY GEAR, GLASSES AND GLOVES.** Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended. Safety glasses are necessary 100% of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. However, take them off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.
- ▶ **OBSERVE ELECTRICAL SAFETY.** Inspect all your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around, such as sawdust. If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty

(appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.

- ▶ **KEEP YOUR WORKSHOP CLEAN.** Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it.
- ▶ **KEEP TOOLS IN GOOD CONDITION.** Everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other



material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use.

- ▶ **KNOW YOUR LIMITS.** If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.



Hays Hears the Bell

After 35 years with Prairie Land Electric, **LEROY HAYS** retired at the end of 2021. He served our members as a foreman in the Phillipsburg area.

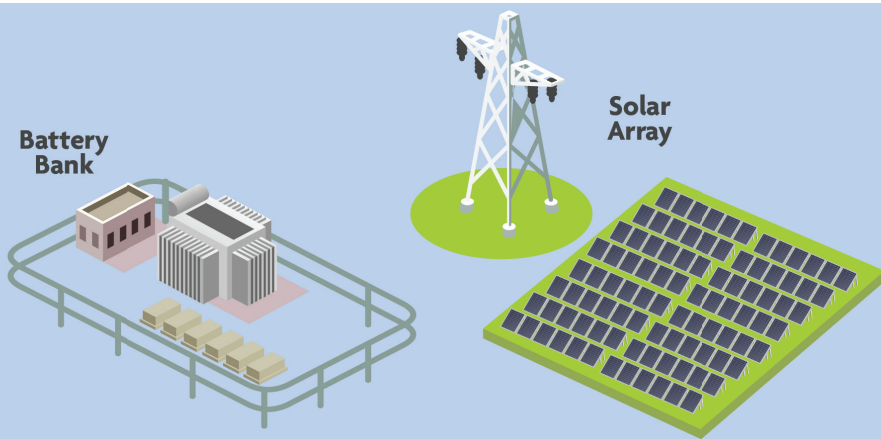
It won't be long before he's back in the saddle, however. Hays is planning to coach

rodeo for Colby Community College in his spare time.

Prairie Land would like to thank LeRoy for his dedication and wish him a long and happy retirement.

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

A new form of battery storage technology, known as the iron-air battery, could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours. Long-duration energy storage will be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the electric grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when needed.



Schumaker Completes 10 Years of Service

SHANE SCHUMAKER began his career with Prairie Land Electric on Feb. 27, 2012, as an IT specialist. He was promoted to manager of IT in June 2014 and then to director of technical services in February 2019.

Shane and his wife, Mandy, have three children: Nataley, 18; Lauryn, 16; and Shelby, 8. In his spare time, he likes to fish, go to his kids' events and spend time with his family.

Prairie Land extends congratulations and appreciation to Shane for 10 years!



Shane Schumaker
10 Years

Prairie Land Employees' Holiday Giving



Here's a glimpse of how Prairie Land employees showed their spirit of holiday giving in 2021. 1. Journeyman **AUSTIN WEIDEN** hung decorations in Agra. 2. Journeyman **DAVID ROSE** decorated his truck for the holiday lights parade in St. Francis. 3. Employees gave 41 gifts for children in the Christmas Blessings program in Penokee. 4. Member services assistant **KENZIE GRIFFITHS** delivering donations to area food pantries. During the holiday challenge, employees donated 1,573 pantry items and \$910 for local food banks. Inspired by the generosity of their employees, Prairie Land Electric also made contributions to each of the pantries.



**Save the Date for the
Prairie Land Electric
Annual Meeting**

Every Step Counts

Take heart. February is American Heart Month and a good time to take stock of your activity, or, for some of us, the lack thereof.

Many people have good intentions to move more, but then the day unfolds differently than planned. Instead of waiting for another day, find easy ways to increase movement today. The American Heart Association offers seven easy ways to boost your activity level with no gym membership required.

- ▶ 1. Grab the leash and walk your dog. Both you and your four-legged friend will be healthier for it.
- ▶ 2. Take your kid (or spouse or friend) for a walk. It is a great way to get face time without screens.
- ▶ 3. Try a 10-minute home workout. Exercising in shorter increments can improve your health because the time spent moving adds up. People usually have an extra 10 minutes here or there throughout the day but may not find a solid 30 minutes or an hour to exercise.
- ▶ 4. Walk and talk. Or walk and work. Talk while you are on the phone or use a walking desk at work. If it is nice outside, have a walking meeting.
- ▶ 5. Tune into fitness. Walk or jog in place, lift weights, or do yoga while you binge watch your favorite episodes.
- ▶ 6. Ditch the car. Park farther away from the building to get in extra steps. Or, bike or walk to your destination.
- ▶ 7. Take the stairs, even if just for a floor or two. The elevator may go up, but your heart rate will not as you press the floor number and listen to the nondescript, piped-in music.

Stop putting off until tomorrow what you can do today. Look for opportunities to move more. Your heart will thank you, and every step counts!



ENERGY CONSERVATION BINGO

Cross off a square for each energy conservation task you complete. Share this with your friends and family to see who can get a “BINGO” first!



B	I	N	G	O
Turn water off while brushing your teeth	Use a reusable bag	Pick up trash	Turn off lights when you leave a room	Walk somewhere instead of riding in a car
Unplug unused phone chargers	Collect items to recycle	Use a smart power strip	Carpool with friends	Reuse a water bottle
Take a 5-minute shower	Use solar lights outdoors	FREE	Unplug unused phone chargers	Use a reusable bag
Carpool with friends	Pick up trash	Turn off lights when you leave a room	Take a 5-minute shower	Collect items to recycle
Reuse a water bottle	Use a smart power strip	Turn water off while brushing your teeth	Walk somewhere instead of riding in a car	Use solar lights outdoors

