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**PRAIRIE LAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# NEWS



## Pole Replacement Project Near Damar

Early November provided perfect weather to complete a large project near Damar to replace several old poles and change the location of a junction pole to accommodate a proposed new road to the grade school. A junction pole is used where two adjacent sections meet, or where a section terminates. Junction poles are taller than a typical pole, measuring 60 feet.

For this project, we used two crews working at the same time on opposite ends of the job. It took several days, so a portable substation was brought in from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and temporary lines were built to keep the community powered up. We captured a few moments of action to share with our members.



Armour rods are used at suspension points where wire touches the insulator. This functions to reinforce and protect the line against bending, compression, abrasion and other damage.



Insulators come in many shapes, sizes and materials. For this project, the old porcelain bell insulators are being replaced with epoxy insulators that are made of fiberglass and covered in rubber.



The new pole would be relocated several feet away, so the lines had to be longer. Brett is using an aluminum “quick sleeve” to splice together more line.



A junction pole requires additional equipment and set-up. On the right, Jacob is preparing a “dead-end shoe” to attach to the pole and firmly hold the end of the wire.

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## 2020 County Tax Distribution

Prairie Land Electric paid more than **\$2.6 MILLION** in property taxes in 2020. This amount is an increase of **\$57,708.54** from taxes paid last year. The details below show the amount of taxes paid to each county.

Although your cooperative signs the check that pays for the property taxes, we realize that you, our members, actually pay the bill. We want to report where some of your money goes when you make a payment each month. A fair portion of that check goes to pay property taxes and that in turn helps the communities in our area.

## 2020 Property Taxes

County	2020	2019	% Change
Cheyenne	\$163,520.74	\$157,229.08	4.00%
Clay	\$7,698.66	\$7,751.20	-0.68%
Cloud	\$326,864.28	\$327,641.82	-0.24%
Decatur	\$174,330.01	\$162,061.98	7.57%
Graham	\$153,537.88	\$144,581.66	6.19%
Jewell	\$103,145.81	\$102,302.81	0.82%
Mitchell	\$75,206.91	\$74,707.45	0.67%
Norton	\$401,580.30	\$390,424.58	2.86%
Osborne	\$71,595.68	\$72,368.42	-1.07%
Phillips	\$432,404.45	\$412,302.95	4.88%
Rawlins	\$124,387.57	\$120,355.18	3.35%
Republic	\$125,381.12	\$126,439.14	-0.84%
Rooks	\$178,291.10	\$174,719.58	2.04%
Sheridan	\$28,056.57	\$29,775.01	-5.77%
Sherman	\$590.50	\$564.88	4.54%
Smith	\$180,454.49	\$184,104.25	-1.98%
Thomas	\$177.66	\$190.78	-6.88%
Washington	\$119,806.46	\$121,800.88	-1.64%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$2,667,030.19</b>	<b>\$2,609,321.65</b>	<b>2.21%</b>

## Advantages of Paperless Billing

A growing number of members are choosing paperless billing. Instead of getting a bill in the mail, they get a text and/or email to notify them that the bill is ready, and they view it in SmartHub. While they may miss out on the pleasures of paper clutter, the benefits are hard to beat.

- ▶ **NO WAITING.** You can view your bill as soon as it has been generated.
- ▶ **ENHANCED SECURITY.** Direct electronic communication reduces the risk of lost statements and mail fraud. Accessing your bill with a password adds another level of security.
- ▶ **NO PAPER WASTE.** There is no need to file, shred, or dispose of your bill.
- ▶ **LOOK AGAIN.** Your bills are available to look at whenever you want to see them. You can even print them out if you really miss holding them.
- ▶ **MONETARY ADVANTAGES.** Most people who use electronic billing also use electronic payments, saving stamps and the hassle of getting a check in the mail. Also, since you are a member of a cooperative, the money Prairie Land saves on bill printing, stuffing and mailing is passed on to you with enhanced capital credits and fewer rate increases.

- ▶ **YOU DECIDE.** If you go paperless and don't like it, you can change your mind.

To enroll in paperless billing using a computer browser, visit our website and click on the "SmartHub Login" button at the top. Sign in, then click on "My Profile." Select "Update my Paperless Settings" and toggle your "Paperless" to "on."

In the mobile app, click on "More" at the bottom of the screen, and select "Paperless Billing." Toggle the button to the right, then click "Yes" when it asks if you are sure. It will tell you it was successful and you can just click "Close."

But what about the bill inserts? It's true that bill inserts aren't available in SmartHub. However, they are archived on our website at [www.prairielandelectric.com/bill-inserts](http://www.prairielandelectric.com/bill-inserts).

**There is no such thing as 100% safe ice.**



**KEC**  
Brought to you by the electric cooperatives of Kansas



## Employees Recognized for Years of Service

Prairie Land extends their congratulations and appreciation to April, Brett, Jarod, Lacey and Garrett on their years of service.



**April Karnopp**  
15 Years

**APRIL KARNOPP** began her employment with Prairie Land on Jan. 3, 2006, as a human resource assistant in Norton. In 2011, she was promoted to human resources manager.

In 2018, she advanced to director of administration, the position she currently holds. "I enjoy working for and with the employees," Karnopp said. "This is just the perfect job for me."

Karnopp and her husband, Kelly have three children and one grandchild. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and being involved in the community.



**Brett McChesney**  
15 Years

**BRETT MCCHESENEY** started his employment Jan. 6, 2006, as a temporary employee working out of the Norton office to help with storm damage cleanup.

In July 2006, he became a permanent employee for Prairie Land and assumed the duties of apprentice lineman. In 2009, he advanced to journeyman lineman, the position he currently holds.

McChesney and his wife, Allison, reside in Norton. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and trapping.



**Jarod Rohr**  
15 Years

**JAROD ROHR** was hired on Jan. 16, 2006, as a journeyman lineman for the Hill city area. In 2018, he advanced to foreman. Rohr serves our members in the same area he was born and raised.

"If you find a job you love, you will never work a day in your life," Rohr said.

Rohr and his wife, Lexi, have three children, Sylar, 14; Slade, 11; and Sabri, 10. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing with his family.



**Lacey Smith**  
15 Years

**LACEY SMITH** was hired Jan. 3, 2006, as a customer service representative in Norton. In March 2013, she transitioned to the billing department where she is currently a billing clerk.

"15 years ago, I never could have imagined that with a few clicks of the computer mouse, service orders, outages and other vital information could be sent directly from our office to each Prairie Land truck in the field," Smith said. "To be a part of this company really makes me feel blessed."

In her spare time, she raises horses, enjoys gardening and spending time with family.



**Garrett Willour**  
15 Years

**GARRETT WILLOUR** began his employment in Norton on Jan. 30, 2006, as an apprentice lineman. In April 2011, he advanced to journeyman lineman.

In May 2015, he was promoted to safety coordinator, the position he currently holds.

Willour has four children, Matt, 17; Logan, 14; Levi, 10; and Adlie, 8. In his spare time, he attends his kids sporting events, and enjoys cooking and fishing.

### KILOWATT TIPS

## Time to Ditch Your Old Space Heater?

If you can't remember when you purchased your space heater, it might be time to replace it. Most of today's models have built-in safety features, such as non-exposed coils and sensors that detect overheating or touch, as well as an automatic shut-off feature in case it gets tipped over.

Regardless of whether your space heater is fresh out of the box or several years old, it should be used safely. Be sure to keep clothing, papers, rugs and other flammable items at least 3 feet away from a space heater. More than half of the heating-related home fires start when items are too close to the heat source, including upholstered furniture, clothing, a mattress or bedding.

Prairie land recommends these additional space heater tips:

- ▶ Read all instructions and only use as recommended.
- ▶ Do not leave a space heater unattended
- ▶ Plug it directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater cycling on and off.
- ▶ Unplug any other item from the outlet you are using; also try and use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
- ▶ Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- ▶ Turn the space heater off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ▶ Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
- ▶ Place the space heater on a flat, level surface. Never place the heater on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.



**Kilowatt**

**KILOWATT** was adopted by Prairie Land after the December 2006 ice storm. She now brings you energy and safety tips each month.

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In this case, the new pole will go in the same hole as the old, but the auger is drilling a bigger hole since the new pole is larger. Extracted dirt is collected on a red blanket that keeps it out of the grass. Later, it attaches to the digger truck to help with the labor when it's time to refill the hole.



The digger trucks are used to raise the new pole into the hole that has been drilled. Chains are used to lift the pole until it is high enough for the digger to grab it. Lineworkers pull the wires back to give room for the installation.



Crew members are refilling a hole around a pole that has been set. Jameson and Cory are shoveling the dirt off the blanket into the hole. Jeremy is using a hydraulic tamper to pack the dirt tight and keep it from settling. He will do this each time more dirt is added.




The digger truck is using a Kelly bar to spin an anchor into the ground which will hold the guy wires that keep the pole secure. Jeremy is running the controls while Keath, Garrett and Austin help monitor for correct placement. They use hand signals to communicate with the operator.

## Board Authorizes Capital Credits

The Board of Trustees for Prairie Land Electric authorized the retirement of \$2,000,000 in capital credits to its members. This retirement includes 100% of 1997 allocations and 63.75% of 1998 allocations. From our generation and transmission cooperatives, the retirement includes 2.92% of all remaining Sunflower Electric Power Corporation allocations and 4.62% of all Mid-Kansas Electric Company allocations.

Those who were members between 1997 and 2019 may have seen a credit on their December bill. Former members may have received a check in the mail.

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	<b>Prairie Land Electric Members</b>	
TO THE ORDER OF: <u>Prairie Land Electric Members</u>		BILL CREDIT
Your portion of \$2 million in retired capital credits		
MEMO: Your portion of the retired credits is based upon revenues from your electricity usage.		Prairie Land Electric Board of Trustees Capital Credit Refund Notice - This is not a check.