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PRAIRIE LAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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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 MANAGER

Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts — this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal

sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.



Kirk Girard

Prairie Land Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line

Continued on page 16B ►

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb, while watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



What to do After a Wildfire



There are more than 50,000 wildfires in the U.S. each year. Between 85% and 90% of wildfires are started by humans. More wildfires occur in the East (including central states), but wildfires in the West are larger and burn more acreage.

Once a wildfire has subsided, always check with officials before returning to your home. When it is safe to do so, check your home for the following:

- ▶ Hot spots in the ground.
- ▶ Smoldering stumps and vegetation.
- ▶ Sparks or embers in exterior areas (including the roof), in the attic, and in the entire house.
- ▶ Fire damage throughout your home.
- ▶ Well or pump-house being in working order.

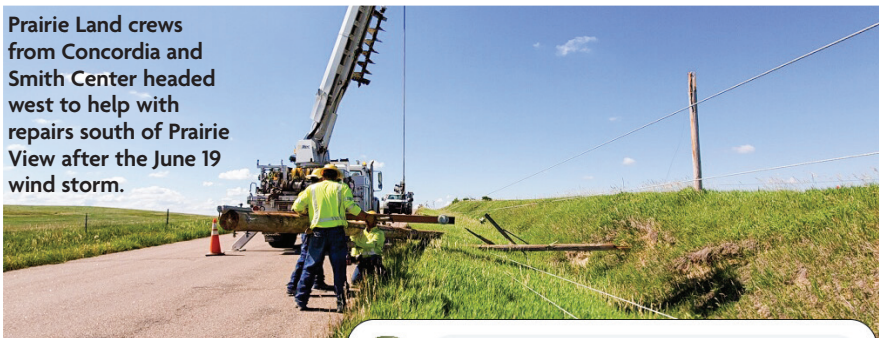
SOURCES: CAL FIRE, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Important Safety Tips

- ▶ Call 911 if any danger is perceived, including downed power lines or damaged power or gas lines.
- ▶ Hire a qualified electrician/ licensed contractor to assess your home's electrical system.
- ▶ Consult local experts on the best way to restore and plant your land with fire-safe landscaping.

Working on the LINE

Prairie Land crews from Concordia and Smith Center headed west to help with repairs south of Prairie View after the June 19 wind storm.



Michelle Stoney-Prewo

I was amazed to see all the clean up on the Prairie View Road. I almost couldn't tell where the poles had been down at. Thank you so much for all of your hard work! You are wonderful!

When a brief but intense wind storm took out approximately 60 poles from north-east Sheridan to northwest Phillips counties right before Father's Day, we were blessed with supportive comments from members. Being very specific, Michelle's (at right) stood out.

Thanks for noticing, Michelle! This is always our goal, but it's a little easier to achieve when the repairs are close enough that the trucks can work from the solid surface of the road.

Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

Continued from page 16A ▶

or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line, tree branches touching a power line, or lightning and other similar events. In

fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Prairie Land Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 1-800-577-3323.



CARINA HOFMEISTER

Atkins Takes on New Role as Director of Member Services

Prairie Land is pleased to announce that **JOHN ATKINS** has accepted the position of director of member services. Atkins replaces Jeff Hardiek, who retired after 34 years of service with the cooperative. He will lead a team of personnel in HVAC, communications and mapping in addition to member services.

“John has been a valuable asset to our company for several years and has succeeded in any challenge given to him,” said Kirk Girard, Prairie Land CEO. “His attention to detail and his advanced understanding of our electric plant and billing practices brings a valuable foundation to his new position.”

Atkins began his career with Prairie Land on July 5, 2006, as a billing clerk. He advanced to mapping technician in 2010 and joined the leadership team as project manager in 2015. He assumed

his latest role on July 9, 2021.

“A consistent theme in our work is to always remember that Prairie Land and our members are one and the same,” Atkins said. “It will be an exciting challenge to work with our members and with emerging technologies in a way that improves lives and keeps everyone safe.”

He and his wife, Stephanie, live in Norton and have three adult sons. Stephanie teaches third-graders at Eisenhower Elementary School. In their spare time, they enjoy family activities, golfing and hiking.



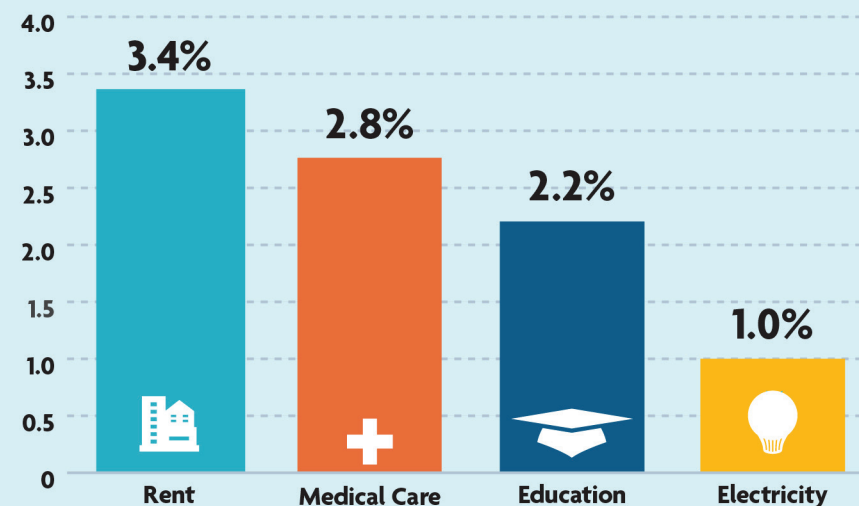
John Atkins

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020

Percent



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

KILOWATT'S TIPS

Proper Rest is Essential

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. Most injuries occur when stress and fatigue are common.

The safety and health of workers, including adequate sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. “Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest,”

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. Getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- ▶ Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; quiet, dark and cool.
- ▶ Limit electronic device use.
- ▶ Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

Managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. “By using the ‘Four A’ Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability,” she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, visit SafeElectricity.org.

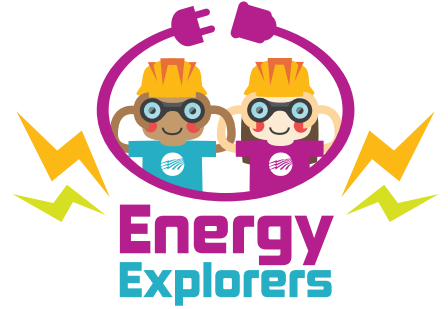
KILOWATT was adopted by Prairie Land after the December 2006 ice storm. She now brings you energy and safety tips each month.



Kilowatt

HYDROPOWER WORD SCRAMBLE

You know that it's never safe to mix water and electricity. But did you know that large amounts of flowing water can be used to create electricity? It's called hydropower, and it's made from the movement of water.



Read the facts about hydropower below, then unscramble each word in **bold** type. Check your work in the answer key.

1. **YROHD** means “water” in Greek.

2. Water flowing down a **EVRR**I is used to spin large turbines that help make the hydroelectricity.

3. When the turbines spin, a large **TROAEGREN** spins, which makes the electricity.

4. The amount of water used to generate hydropower is controlled through the use of large **MDAS**.

5. Hydropower is a form of **ELNERAEWB** energy.

ANSWER KEY: 1. HYDRO 2. RIVER 3. GENERATOR 4. DAMS 5. RENEWABLE