

PRAIRIE LAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

Prairie Land Welcomes New Employees

Prairie Land would like to welcome Melanie and Butch to the cooperative family.



MELANIE ROMEY joined the Prairie Land staff on May 6, as a network administrator in the Technical Services department.

Romey was previously employed by Valley Hope Association as the

Melanie Romey

IT/Systems manager.

Romey has three children: Elijah, 16, Rhiannon, 12, and Adriana, 10. In her spare time, she enjoys camping, fishing and riding motorcycles.



BUTCH HAMEL began his employment with Prairie Land on May 20 as a journeyman lineman in the Hill City area.

Hamel is originally from Damar and previously worked for Midwest Energy.

Butch Hamel

Hamel and his wife, Traci, were married on June 1. They have a daughter, Kendrix, 3 ½ years old.

In his spare time, he enjoys farming and outdoor activities.

Beat the Peak This Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer. According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48 percent of energy expenditures just on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, higher efficiency model, or caulking around windows and doors in your home, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency, which can help reduce your energy bills. Prairie Land offers the following suggestions:

- ▶ Close curtains, blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day. Not only is about one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but about 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to energy.gov.
- ▶ Install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to Energy.gov.
- ▶ Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- ▶ Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade trees and those that insulate the

About **30%** of a home's energy is lost through windows.

A few quick adjustments could help save energy. Read about some easy changes in the Beat the Peak article.

Information collected from Energy.gov, particularly 26Energy.gov



- foundation can reduce energy costs.
- ▶ Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can help prevent hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. By addressing air leaks around your home and adding insulation, homeowners can save around 10 percent annually on energy bills, according to energystar.gov.
 - ▶ Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, which could help your air conditioner run more efficiently.
 - ▶ Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade. Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

Congratulations on Your Retirement

Prairie Land employees, staff, family and friends celebrated the retirement of Marion Hays on May 14, at the Smith Center Firehouse.



(From left) Jeff Hardiek, Director of Member Services; Chuck Look, CEO; Marion Hayes; Jim Coash, Operations Manager for Concordia; and Kirk Girard, Assistant CEO.

MARION HAYES began his career

as a journeyman lineman in Smith Center on Oct. 1, 1982, the position he held at his retirement. Hayes became a Prairie Land employee with the Aquila, Inc. acquisition in 2007.

Hayes was also the Smith Center Fire Chief and after 32 years, he retired from

that position on the same day.

"Prairie Land has been a great company to work for and I have enjoyed my time," Hayes said.

Hayes and his wife, Kathy, have one son. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and golfing. Congratulations Marion!

Mendenhall Completes 20 years of Service



Everett Mendenhall, 20 years

EVERETT MENDENHALL began his employment on July 9, 1999, as a meter reader in the Concordia area.

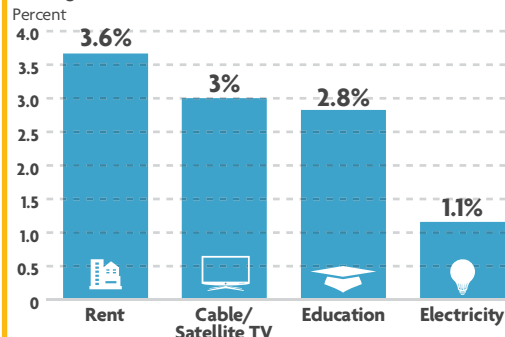
He became a Prairie Land employee with the Aquila, Inc. acquisition in 2007.

In 2012 Mendenhall advanced to assistant warehouseman, and 2019 he was promoted to warehouseman.

Mendenhall was born and raised in Concordia, but he also lived in Arizona and Southern California. He served four years in the Air Force and is a Vietnam veteran.

Mendenhall, wife Donna, and family live in Concordia. In his spare time, he enjoys making salsa, four-wheeling, being with family and vacation.

Average Annual Price Increase 2013-2018



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.

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

KILOWATT TIPS

Watch For Signs of Home Electrical Overload This Summer

Summer is a time to relax and enjoy the sun for many. But for your electric system, summer is stressful. Many run the air conditioner frequently to try to stay comfortable.



Kilowatt

When a lot of people run their air conditioners simultaneously, the electric grid and your home's electric system can become stressed. This leads to blackouts, brownouts and even fires and electric shocks.

Be mindful of how you are using electricity and try to use electricity in off-peak hours. Most electricity is demanded in the middle of the day. If you can hold off running your washer, dryer, oven and dishwasher until later in the day, you can save money and ease electrical stress.

Know the signs of electrical stress and safety hazards:

- ▶ Flickering, blinking and dimming lights.
- ▶ Frequently tripped circuit breakers and blown fuses.
- ▶ Crackling, sizzling or buzzing sounds from outlets.
- ▶ Wall plates that are warm or discolored.

No matter the season or age of a home, residents should be vigilant and continually check for electrical hazards such as cracked or fraying electrical cords, overloaded outlets and circuits, and improper wattage light bulbs in appliances, lamps and light fixtures. Also, make sure smoke alarms are placed and functioning properly.

Consider electrical inspection, especially if you live in an older home. A qualified electrician can alert you to safety hazards and give you suggestions for improvements.

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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