

The CIRCUIT

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



*** Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for Over 82 Years

February 2022

Drawing Winner

DOUG BIGLER is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing.

Doug, to claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by February 26, 2021 & give us the account number from your electric bill.

Photo Contest

Submit an exceptionally unique, high quality photo for a chance to have it published on the cover of our annual meeting booklet. The winner will receive a \$40 bill credit. Entries due by February 25th. E-mail photo(s) to: dalexander@arkvalley.com. Photo must be in tif, jpg, png or gif format.

Do You Qualify for LIEAP?

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program is taking applications. If eligible, they will pay a portion of your electric bill. Call 800-432-0043 or apply online at <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx>. Deadline to apply 3/31/22.

2022 Scholarship Winners

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative would like to congratulate Megan Ratzlaff and Brady Fowler, winners of the Scholarship Contest.

Megan will receive a \$3,000 scholarship to use in attending the college of her choice. She is the daughter of Ric and Susie Ratzlaff of Buhler. If you would like to hear the winning essay, Megan will be presenting her essay to the membership during the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Members on April 12th.



Megan Ratzlaff
1st Place Winner



Brady Fowler
2nd Place Winner

Brady Fowler will receive a \$1,000 scholarship to use in attending the college of his choice. He is the son of Brent and Kristen Fowler of Plevna.

Ark Valley would like to thank all the applicants for their time and effort put into the 2022 Youth Competition.

Four Reasons We Love Serving Our Members



Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy and of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them—with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top four reasons why we love serving you, the members of Ark Valley Electric Cooperative.

- 1. 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, Ark Valley exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1939—to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.
- 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.** Ark Valley 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 Ark Valley 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 it thrive. That's why Ark Valley donates to local charities, schools and scholarship funds. It's also why we invest in 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.



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Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Trustees for the Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association held its regular meeting for the month of December on December 27, 2021.

General Manager, Jackie Holmberg, made a presentation to the Board concerning the accrued property taxes assessed by county for 2021 and compared them to the 2020 and 2019 assessments. On average, the Cooperative's system-wide property taxes decreased 3.68%.

The largest decrease was Barton County at 20.49%.

Some counties did increase their assessments against the Cooperative. The largest increase in property tax assessment was Stafford County at 2.37%. Holmberg also reported that a hearing had been held on the Cooperative's property tax appeal, from its 2020 and 2019 assessments, before the Board of Tax Appeals, but a ruling has yet to be issued.

The Board reviewed in depth a proposed 2022 Annual Budget, including a line-by-line review of capital expenditures and the revenue assumptions. The Annual Budget is a planning document used to project Ark Valley's monthly revenues and expenses. The anticipated operating revenue is projected to be approximately \$14,404,000 for 2022, while the anticipated total cost for electrical service is projected to be approximately \$13,291,000. This leaves an expected total margin of approximately \$1,322,000. The Board and management regularly examine costs throughout the year to determine if the Cooperative is running efficiently. If cost overruns would occur in one area of the Cooperative's budget, or if revenues would decline unexpectedly, spending could be adjusted accordingly so the Cooperative could remain on stable financial footing. Trustees asked numerous questions concerning the estimates of monthly revenue, expenses, and carry over items from the 2021 budget prior to approving the 2022 Annual Budget.



Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

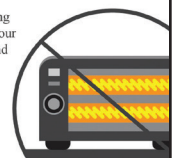
We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.



TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



The Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.