

# The CIRCUIT

## Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



\*\*\* Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for Over 83 Years

July 2022

### Know the Signs of a Scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the Covid-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

#### Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 620-662-6661. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, arkvalley.com. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us at the Ark Valley office, or use SmartHub to check the status of your account.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Ark Valley will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

#### Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers as well as identified numbers. Caller ID can be "spoofed". Spoofing is when a caller deliberately falsifies the number displayed on your caller ID to disguise their identity. The call may look like it's from a company you do business with or maybe a person you know. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

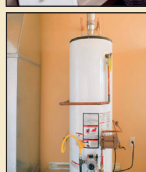
Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. When we perform work for our members, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

### Drawing Winner

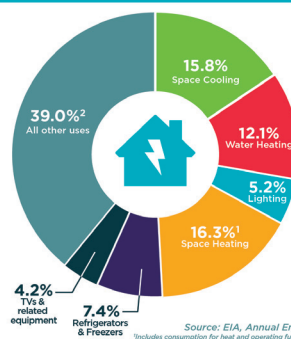
**KAY WARD** is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing.

Kay, to claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by July 29, 2022 & give us the account number from your electric bill.



### How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020  
<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.  
<sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.



Ark Valley Electric Cooperative  
 10 E 10th Ave, South Hutchinson, KS 67505

(620) 662-6661  
[www.arkvalley.com](http://www.arkvalley.com)

## Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Trustees for the Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association held its regular meeting for the month of May on May 23, 2022 and a special meeting for the purpose of strategic planning on May 25, 2022.

The Board reviewed a North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) warning concerning insufficient electrical generation capacity this summer that could result in rolling blackouts. California, for example, is approximately 1700 mega-watts short of generation capacity. Government planners in that state will attempt to remedy the situation by not providing electricity to approximately 4 million resident homes during times of peak demand. The Board discussed possible options to mitigate electricity disruptions to its members.

Like most people browsing social media, Trustees have seen advertisements from solar companies overpromising how installing solar panels on your home will lower, or in some instances completely eliminate, electric bills. For a variety of reasons, that will NEVER happen. Staff has expressed concern for the misleading tactics of some solar installers. When asked by the Board which installer was the most forthright, staff was of the opinion that King Solar produces projections reflective of the Cooperative's rates to its potential customers.

\* However, King Solar is the exception to the rule.

The Board wants Ark Valley members to contact the Cooperative to verify the savings projections promised by solar installers and the implications of electric vehicle charging at a residential home. To accomplish this, staff has been directed to create and promote checklists for members to utilize prior to solar panel or electric vehicle purchases.

The next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held Monday, June 27, 2022 at the Cooperative's headquarters in South Hutchinson.

\*Ark Valley does not recommend or promote any solar generation provider or installer. This statement is only an opinion offered by employees of the Cooperative to guide the Board of Trustees in the context of how best to assist its members.

## Use Small Kitchen Appliances to Help Beat the Peak

At the heart of the summer when the temperatures rise, finding ways to improve energy efficiency at home can help you reduce demand, save energy and money. Being conscious of the peak times from 3 to 6 p.m. on weekdays and making small adjustments during this timeframe won't only help control your energy costs, but it can help keep temperatures in your home more pleasant on hot days.

When it comes to heat and humidity, the selection of kitchen appliances you choose to use can provide multiple benefits. Your countertop appliances or the ones you've stashed away in your pantry can keep you cooler and use less energy.



Microwaves use about 40% less energy as a full-size oven, and a toaster oven or induction cooker consumes about half the electricity. Because they are generally designed to heat food more efficiently in less space, the surface areas available for heating are smaller, so it keeps kitchens cooler and helps your air-conditioner to operate less.

## Summer Rates

Ark Valley's summer rates began in June and will be reflected on your July bill.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.



Source: Energy Information Administration and Dept. of Energy

## Water Heater Rebates

Ark Valley offers electric water heater rebates to its qualified members:

- Non-lifetime Water Heater - \$100.00
- Lifetime Water Heater - \$150.00



### Guidelines to Qualify for Rebate:

1. Must be installed on Ark Valley's line.
2. Must be a minimum of 40 gallons.
3. Installation must be verified.
4. Will need proof of purchase.

We sell Marathon water heaters. Call us for a quote. 620.662.6661

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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).