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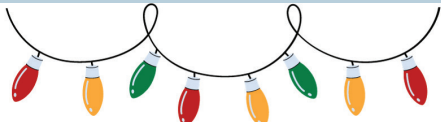
Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



*** Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for Over 84 Years

December 2023

Holiday Hours



We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season. We will be closed on December 22nd from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and all day on December 25th and January 1st to allow our employees time with family.

If you have an outage or trouble on your line, please call 1-888-297-9212.

Merry Christmas
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Congratulations!

To honor its members during Cooperative Appreciation Month, Ark Valley Electric held a drawing to give away a battery powered mini outdoor chain saw. The winner of the drawing was:



Dean Johnson
of Hutchinson

Congratulations

It Pay\$ to be a Cooperative Member

Ark Valley Electric's board of trustees recently approved a \$1.25 million capital credit general retirement, refunding past margins back to cooperative members. The total retirement includes the remaining balance from the 2003 allocation and portions of 2021 and 2022.

Any profits earned by a not-for-profit cooperative are allocated to the cooperative's member-owners. These excess profits, also referred to as margins, are allocated to members as capital credits in proportion to the amount of electricity billed during the year. Because capital credits are based on electricity purchases, each member's allocation and refund is different.

Capital credits are a unique fundamental to the cooperative business model and a financial benefit to the membership. Investor-owned power companies make profits and pay dividends to stockholders, but cooperatives work on a not-for-profit basis and allocate their operating income back to their members. Capital credits are not dollars in a bank account, instead they represent funds that have been invested in the co-op's utility plant rather than increasing debt.

In order to maintain cash flow and ensure good financial standing, capital credits are retained by the cooperative until a distribution is feasible. This year's retirement is the 13th consecutive year for this tangible demonstration of your ownership in Ark Valley Electric Cooperative. Thank you for being a valued member-owner!

Billing Questions

Since the rates have recently changed, members have been asking more questions than usual about their bills. One of the common questions is "Why did the basic service charge increase?"

Your electric bill is more than just the kilowatt hours you use on a daily basis. Every meter on our system pays a flat rate per month no matter how much electricity is being used. The fixed basic service charge is billed monthly and helps recover the cost to operate and maintain our system and its reliability. These costs exist for Ark Valley even when no electricity is being used. We must pay for poles, equipment, wire, salaries, insurance, taxes, buildings, trucks and most importantly, upgrades and maintenance to ensure the reliability of our system so your lights come on when you need them the most.

This charge was adjusted to more accurately reflect the cost of providing service, so members are charged more equitably for the service received. For the single phase rate, the basic service charge is now \$50 per month, although the analysis indicated that the actual cost for this service is \$63 per month. The difference between what members are charged and the actual cost is subsidized through the energy charge.

Although overall the rate changes were revenue neutral and won't collect any additional revenue for the cooperative, the changes do affect members differently. Future newsletters will address additional questions that members are asking about the billing changes.



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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 October on October 30, 2023.

The Board addressed load control and distributed generation savings for 2023. Jackie Holmberg, General Manager, calculated the cost incurred and the estimated savings realized, including the 70% ratchet for the winter months, from running diesel generators at the Arlington and Medora substations, production at the Huntsville solar site, and utilizing irrigation load control. Ark Valley realized an estimated \$265,590.47 in total net distributed diesel generation savings during the 2023 peak season, which was up from a total net savings of \$231,287.01 in 2022. Controlling irrigation load for the 2023 peak season was projected to have saved the Cooperative approximately \$491,916.49, which is down from a total net savings of \$563,720.03 in 2022. The peak savings resulting from the solar energy production at Huntsville should save an estimated \$146,287.53, which is up from the total net savings of \$145,477.08 in 2022. The overall net savings for the load control, distributed diesel generation, and solar energy production for 2023 totaled an estimated \$903,794.49, which is down from the overall \$940,484.13 net savings in 2022.

The Board also reviewed a potential land purchase of ground near the Sandhill substation to install solar generation, the schedule for the KEPCo Annual Meeting, and the arrangements for the Board's strategic planning meeting in December.

Drawing Winner

MIKE BOMAN is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing.

Mike, to claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by December 29, 2023 & give us the account number from your electric bill.



Safety is for Everyone

Ark Valley's number one priority is safety. Although we often express the importance of our employees returning home to their families safely at the end of each day, our concern for safety doesn't end with the employees, it extends to everyone.

Unfortunately, the number of vehicle accidents that involve Ark Valley's electric poles have increased this year, so we want to make sure that you are aware of these safety procedures if you are ever in this situation.

- Stay in the car if you are in a car accident with a power pole.
- Warn anyone who approaches your car to stay away from the vehicle.
- Call 911 for help, and wait until utility personnel tell you it is safe to exit the car.
- If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. After exiting the vehicle, keep your feet together and "hop" away. **Don't run and never lift a foot.** You must either shuffle your feet in tiny steps, with your feet *never* leaving the ground, or you can hop while keeping your feet together. Separating your feet can create two contact points with the ground and can result in a shock if the ground is energized by a fallen wire. ⚡

Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.
2. Inspect electrical cords. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...
3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.
4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.
5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stove top unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels. Ark Valley Electric Cooperative wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season.

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.