

The CIRCUIT

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



*** Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for Over 84 Years

January 2024



Wishing you and your family a happy new year filled with hope, health, and happiness - with a generous sprinkle of fun!

Do You Qualify for LIEAP?

Do you qualify for help with your electric bill? The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded utility assistance program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. The application period began December 18, 2023 and ends March 29, 2024.

Persons Eligible

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
2. Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level.

Additional information may be obtained by calling 1-888-369-4777 or by applying online at: <https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx>

Persons Living at Address	Max Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,823
2	\$2,465
3	\$3,108
4	\$3,750
5	\$4,393
6	\$5,035
7*	\$5,678

* If more than 7 living in home, see website

Nominations Committee

The By-Laws of your Cooperative provide that the Board of Trustees shall appoint a Committee on Nominations.

In keeping with this provision, the Board has appointed the following members to the 2024 Committee:

Geoffrey Burgess
19413 W 69th Ave
Sterling, KS 67579

Budd Fountain
22019 S Lerado Rd
Langdon, KS 67510

Doug Schrag
22419 S Valley Pride Rd
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570

Derek Zongker
2104 S Langdon Rd
Plevna, KS 67568

Bret Dunn
19904 W Red Rock Rd
Abbyville, KS 67510

Paul Gorges
2818 N Nickerson Rd
Nickerson, KS 67561

Russ Willems
74 9th Ave
Inman, KS 67546



Keith McNickle

Keith McNickle will be up for re-election and Judy Kinsler has reached her term limit as of the date of the next Annual Meeting of Members on April 16, 2024. The Committee on Nominations will meet on Saturday, January 13, 2024, for the purpose of making nominations for Trustees to fill these vacancies. The Committee will post a list of such nominations in the office of your Cooperative. Additional information concerning each candidate will be published in the Annual Report, which each member will receive prior to the Annual Meeting.

Other nominations may be made by a signed petition of 15 or more members, not less than 15 days prior to the Annual Meeting. Such nominations shall also be posted in the Cooperative Office. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the time of the Annual Meeting.

The Board of Trustees consists of seven members. The present board members are: Keith McNickle, Stafford: President; Steve Schweizer, Plevna: Vice-President; Judy Kinsler, Kingman: Secretary; Larry Froese, Inman: Treasurer; Joe Seiwert, Pretty Prairie; Jaime Howard, Alden; and Doug Barr, Nickerson.

An Annual Meeting of Members shall be held each year in Hutchinson, Kansas, usually between March 15th and April 15th, unless the Board of Trustees shall designate by resolution some other city, place, date, and/or time.

The Board resolved to host the next Annual Meeting of Members on April 16, 2024, at the North Sunflower Building on the State Fair Grounds in Hutchinson, Kansas



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

(620) 662-6661
www.arkvalley.com

Billing Questions

In the December newsletter we began a monthly series to address questions that members are asking about the recent billing changes. The first topic we started with was the basic service charge. This month we are answering the question “Why did the demand charge increase?”

To best answer this question, it will be helpful to first explain demand. Expressed as “kilowatts” (kW), demand is the maximum amount of power that is used during a 60-minute time period during the billing month. Demand is the total kilowatts being required, or used by electric appliances, devices, and equipment, in a household at any one time. The more electrical devices that operate at the same time, the higher the demand. A customer’s highest monthly demand indicates the very minimum size infrastructure Ark Valley must have in place to supply the necessary amount of power needed at each service location on our system, day or night.

When the electric rates aren’t aligned with the costs of the cooperative, some members end up paying more than they should, while others don’t pay enough for the electric service they receive. With the help of a rate consultant, the single phase rate design was adjusted to include a \$3.00 demand charge year round to more fairly collect each member’s share of their demand costs. This charge helps to more closely recover the costs associated with the amount of stress placed on the grid to meet the demand needs at all times.

By better aligning each aspect of a member’s energy usage with the appropriate component of the cooperative’s costs, it charges members more adequately and fairly, while continuing to give members more ways to control their electric bills if that is their desire. Knowing when and how your power is being used is essential to limiting demand and ultimately lowering your costs.

Major appliances used for heating and cooling, cooking, and laundry are your home’s largest energy consumers and have the greatest impact on your overall energy usage and demand. The more appliances or devices you run at the same time, the higher your electricity demand. Staggering the use of major appliances is the easiest way to manage your demand charges. When you consistently stagger the use of major appliances so they don’t run at the same time, you can keep your demand low. This can be made easier by utilizing technology that helps you remember to offset energy use like timers, delay start settings, mobile apps and programmable thermostats.

Hopefully this gives you a better understanding of demand and how making small changes in the way your household appliances are used affects your demand costs. Managing your demand can put you in the driver’s seat of your electric bill, but the next newsletter will focus on additional questions about other billing changes that you should be aware of in order to control your costs as much as possible.

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 18, 2023.

General Manager, Jackie Holmberg, made a presentation to the Board concerning the accrued property taxes assessed by county for 2023 and compared them to the 2022 and 2021 assessments. On average, the system-wide property taxes increased five and twenty-four hundredths of a percent (5.24%) from \$594,660.14 to \$625,793.86. The largest percentage decrease was Saline County at twenty-two and two hundredths of a percent (-22.02%). The largest percentage increase in property tax assessment was Reno County at seven and forty-one hundredths of a percent (7.41%). It should be noted that the method used by the Property Valuation Division of the Kansas Department of Revenue to value rural electric cooperatives’ property in Kansas has been appealed, and the case is going to be set for oral arguments before the Kansas Supreme Court during the spring.

The Board also reviewed the 2024 workers’ compensation and liability premium costs for Federated Rural Insurance Exchange, which increased four and one-quarter of a percent (4.25%) overall, or from \$101,437.00 in 2023 to \$105,753.00 in 2024. The 2024 health insurance premium costs for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, which decreased five and twenty-four hundredths of a percent (-5.24%), or \$307,116.36 in 2023 to \$291,012.12 in 2024.



2024 Annual Meeting is April 16th



- Vote for Board Members
- Learn about your Cooperative
- Enjoy a night out with your neighbors
- Win prizes donated by Vendors

Drawing Winner

JEFF ELLIS is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing.

Jeff, to claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by January 31, 2024 & give us the account number from your electric bill.

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.