

The CIRCUIT

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



*** Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for over 85 Years

April 2024

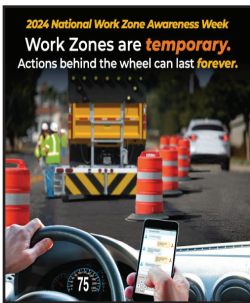
Get Your Bills Sooner

Recent feedback from our members has indicated that bills seem to be taking longer to arrive to them in the mail. While our bills are typically mailed by the 8th of each month, they may take up to a week or longer to be delivered to your mailbox.

If you'd like to receive or access your bill earlier, you can sign up for SmartHub® to see your bills, make payments, analyze your usage, and much more! You can either elect paperless billing or continue to receive a paper bill while still being able to utilize the benefits of SmartHub®. Visit www.arkvalley.com to register today.

Work Zone Awareness Week

April 15-19 is National Work Zone Awareness Week. If you approach a roadside crew while driving, please move into an open lane (away from the work zone). If a lane is not open, please slow down. #WorkZoneSafety



Drawing Winner

RYAN RASNIC is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing. Ryan, to claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by April 30, 2024 & give us the account number from your electric bill.



Thank a Lineworker on April 18th

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Ark Valley Electric, you would probably picture a lineworker. Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining infrastructure critical to our electric system, lineworkers are at the forefront of the cooperative.

"Lineworker" is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines, and regardless of the time of day, they must work in challenging conditions at times to keep power flowing to our local communities.

Being a lineworker takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. This dedication and sense of service to the community is why one day is set aside annually to celebrate and recognize the men and women in the nation who work around the clock to keep the lights on.



#ThankALineworker

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees of the cooperative, there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes whose commitment to service runs just as deep. All of the employees at Ark Valley have multiple responsibilities and work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability our members expect and deserve.

We are proud of all the dedicated employees that represent Ark Valley, but we will be saying an extra thank you on Lineworker Appreciation Day to our linemen for the work they do year-round.

Use Caution Around Utility Roadway Work Zones

Electric utility vehicles and workers often share streets and roadways with motorists in order to access overhead power lines and other electrical equipment. This can be dangerous for workers and motorists. Ark Valley Electric urges you to go slowly and be especially careful when you see crews at work. Typically, hundreds of workers are killed on road work zones each year. Fatal work zone crashes occur most often in the summer and fall. More than twice as many work zone crashes happen on weekdays compared to weekends, so be extra cautious driving to and from work.

To help prevent fatalities and injuries this year, Safe Electricity recommends the following guidelines while driving:

- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment and workers.
- Be patient: Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so try to allow time for unexpected delays in your schedule.
- Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- Use your headlights at dusk and during inclement weather.
- Minimize distractions: Avoid changing the radio station, using a cell phone, or eating while driving.

The most common crash in a roadway work zone is the rear-end collision, so remember to leave at least four car lengths of braking distance between you and the car in front of you.



Ark Valley Electric Cooperative
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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 February on February 26, 2024.

The Board was informed that former-Trustee Dan Schnurr, Sterling, had requested the Nominating Committee remove his name from consideration for the position of Trustee at the 2024 Annual Meeting of Members. The committee agreed to his request to withdrawal from the ballot. With Schnurr withdrawing from the ballot, that leaves four (4) Ark Valley members to run for two (2) Trustee positions: Keith McNickle, Stafford; Peggy Burgess, Arlington; John Helmer, Inman; and Paul Mikols, Hutchinson.

Jackie Holmberg, General Manager, presented a draft set of zoning ordinances pertaining to commercial and residential solar projects in Reno County. Staff will be reviewing the recently proposed ordinances to determine whether it may possibly impact future solar projects for the Cooperative or its members.

The Board approved the creation of a new electrician position at Ark Valley. The position will hopefully be filled within the next three months, and the new employee's job will be to primarily, but not exclusively, perform residential electrical services, which is an underserved market in Ark Valley's territory.

Billing FAQ

When will I receive my bill? Bills are processed on the 7th of each month at the end of the business day unless the 7th falls on a weekend, then it will be the 6th or 8th. If you receive a paper bill, you can expect it in the mail about a week later. If you would like to have it sooner, you can sign up for e-billing or login to SmartHub to access your bill.

What is SmartHub? SmartHub is a portal for members to access account information, including billing, usage, and payment history. Members can also make payments, report outages, and update account information.

How do I sign up for SmartHub? From your computer or mobile Apple or Android device, go to arkvalley.com or download the SmartHub app from the App Store. Click on the SmartHub icon or "New User? Register to use SmartHub!". Follow the prompts to create your username and password.

When is my payment due? Payments are due in the office on the last day of the month unless you have set up recurring credit cards or auto-draft from a checking account. The automated recurring payments are charged or deducted from your account on the last business day of the month.

How can I pay my bill after hours? Because we know not everyone prefers the same method of payment, members have access to a variety of options to use.

1. There is a dropbox located at the front of the parking lot on the west side of the office and one is located next to the office front door. We recommend that this is only used for check and money order payments.

2. Paying by phone is one quick and simple way to pay your bill without having to travel to the office. Our bill pay number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Members can either use a bank account or a credit card by calling 844-262-2443 and following the operator prompts to make a payment.

3. By using a bank account, MasterCard, or Visa credit card, members can pay their bill any time through the SmartHub portal on Ark Valley's website or through the mobile app. Simply establish a login or enter your login to make an electronic payment to your account.

Why don't you accept credit card payments in the office? All of our cardholder data functions are fully outsourced to a validated third party service provider that has established the security measures required by the Payment Card Industry (PCI). In order to maintain our PCI compliance and to better safeguard your cardholder data and maintain the security of payment transactions, we don't electronically store, process, or transmit any cardholder data on our software or physically in the office.

Kansas Weatherization Assistance Available for Qualified Applicants

The Weatherization Assistance Program is a residential energy efficiency program available to income eligible families. If you qualify for LIEAP (Utility Assistance Benefits) TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) or SSI (Supplemental Security Income), you are automatically considered for weatherization services (certain restrictions apply) that SCKEDD (South Central Kansas Economic Development District) provides.

Weatherization improves heating efficiency and fuel savings by ensuring your home holds in heat and air conditioning, while keeping hot and cold air out. At no charge, the clients will receive a comprehensive home assessment which may include repair or replacement of heating systems, insulation and caulking. You are welcome to contact the Ark Valley office for an application, or call the local area SCKEDD office directly at (620) 259-6544.

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.