

K.C. ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2020

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Our mission is to provide our members with safe, reliable service at the lowest cost, while maintaining an environmentally responsible, accountable and sustainable operation now and in the future.

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

BY DAVID CHURCHWELL
GENERAL MANAGER

There were many changes at K.C. Electric Association in the past year, but be assured: One thing that will never change is our goal to provide our consumer-members with safe and reliable service at the lowest cost while maintaining a sustainable operation.

During 2019, K.C. crews kept busy completing construction workplan projects and systemwide maintenance, along with raising, moving and installing new power lines for the wind farms being built in Cheyenne and Kit Carson counties.

System damage during the historic “bomb cyclone” in March was minimal, but late spring and summer storms proved to be challenging at times. Relentless wind, rain, lightning and hail storms ravaged parts of our system from June through August, damaging poles and equipment. To finish the year, Mother Nature once again flexed her muscles delivering an ice and wind storm the last week of December, which caused damage to system infrastructure. K.C. crews worked long hours in treacherous conditions to repair the damage caused by those storms.

In June, our 2019 Annual Meeting was held in Hugo and we had an outstanding turnout. Dave Ritchey of Cheyenne County, Wayne Parrish of Kit Carson County and Marvin Thaller of Lincoln County ran unopposed and were deemed re-elected to the board of directors for three-year terms. The 2020 Annual Meeting will be held on June 4, in Cheyenne Wells. Be sure to put it on your calendar and plan to attend K.C. Electric’s 74th annual meeting.

In July, K.C. Electric was once again recognized by the Colorado Rural Electric Association for another year of no lost-time injuries. Not only did K.C. employees work the entire year without a lost-time accident,



DAVID CHURCHWELL

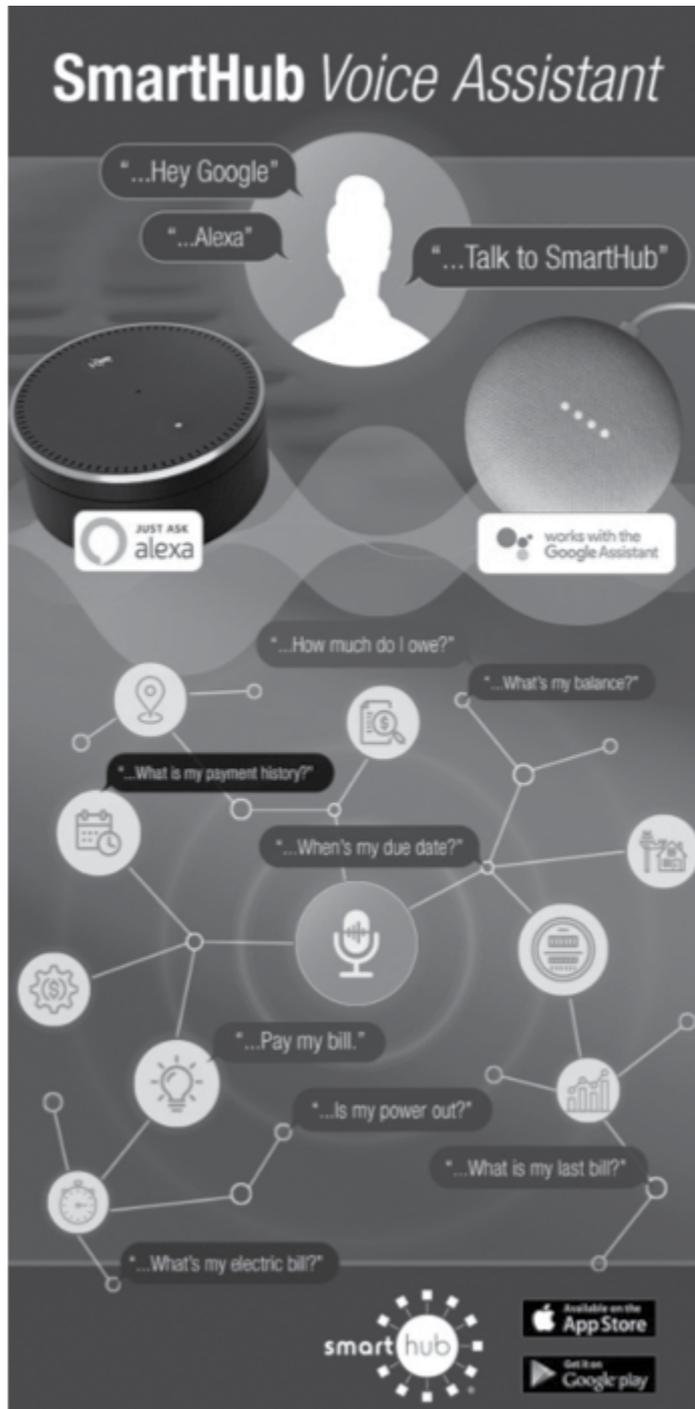
they also worked the entire year without any medical reportable incident. This was a great accomplishment for the employees of K.C. Electric considering the dangerous and varying work conditions they endure throughout the year.

In 2019, K.C. hired a third-party consultant to conduct a cost-of-service study. A cost-of-service study is an essential tool for determining whether our rates properly reflect the actual cost of providing electric service. We are still working through the details of this study to ensure that each rate class is paying its fair share of the service costs.

As I’m writing this, year-end financials are not complete, but we are projecting that we will finish the year with adequate margins to meet our lender-required financial ratios. In December, your board of directors approved a general capital credit retirement of \$1.126 million to you, our consumer-members. In addition to this, over \$110,000 in capital credits were paid to estates throughout the year for a total 2019 capital credit retirement of over \$1.2 million.

Legislative, regulatory and environmental changes will continue to keep the electrical industry changing at a rapid pace. With assistance from our statewide organization, the Colorado Rural Electric Association, and our national organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, we continue to monitor legislative activity on local, state and federal levels to determine how it will affect K.C. Electric and you, our consumer-members.

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SMARTHUB VOICE ASSISTANT: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SMART HOME WITH K.C.'s SMARTHUB

Homes are becoming smarter by the day. With various devices available that control anything from lights to garage doors and music, the home can be controlled with the touch of a button ... or even just a voice command.

These smart homes are driven by many devices, but among the most popular and cost-effective are the Amazon Echo and Google Home devices. These devices provide a lot of functionality, not just controlling the smart home, but also connecting to service providers for a host of options.

SMARTHUB VOICE ASSISTANT

Now you can connect with K.C. Electric Association through SmartHub and your smart home device such as your Amazon Echo or Google Home. Pay your bill, get payment history, check your usage and balance, look for service issues and more anytime. Here are some tips on how you can interact with K.C. Electric Association through your smart home device.

Devices supported

All Amazon Echo and Google Home devices are supported. This includes:

- Amazon Echo
- Amazon Echo Dot
- Amazon Echo Plus
- Amazon Echo Show
- Amazon Echo Spot
- Google Home
- Google Home Hub
- Google Home Max
- Google Home Mini

Functionality available

Below is a list of the current functionality included in SmartHub voice assistant:

- What is my account balance? (If prepaid, device will give days remaining.)
- What is my balance?
- What's my payment amount?
- When's my due date?
- How much do I owe?
- What's my electric bill?

Most recent billing and payment history

- What was my last payment amount?
- What was my prior billing?
- What is my payment history?
- What is my last bill?

Payments

You can make a one-time payment with a previously-stored payment option.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: Notice of pole testing possibly in your area in 2020

K.C. Electric Association has secured the services of the Sundance Pole Position, Inc., to perform pole testing on its facilities. Sundance will work in the Stratton area as well as the Stratton substation. Crews will be in these designated areas beginning the first part of February 2020, until the end of April 2020. You will recognize them by their trucks, or they will most likely be on four-wheeler ATVs traveling the designated pole routes in the respective areas. If you have any questions, please contact K.C. Electric Association.

Current outage information

- Is there an outage?
- Do I have any outages on my account?
- Is my power out?

Account number

- What's my account number?

Custom alerts

- Any news?
- Any alerts?
- Is there any information available?

Help

- You can request your current balance, get information about your last payment, check for outages on your accounts, read your account number and get information or alerts. We are always adding new features to better serve you.
- You can ask for alerts, inquire about your current account balance, read your linked accounts, check outage status and read utility alerts.

SMARTHUB VOICE ASSISTANT SETUP GUIDE**Google Home devices****AUTOMATIC SETUP**

1. Ask the Google Assistant to open your app. ("Hey Google, let me talk to SmartHub.")
2. Review and agree to Google Assistant privacy policy when prompted.
3. Link your SmartHub account when prompted.
4. SmartHub app will be sent to the provider search where the user can select the provider and then will be taken to the login page.

MANUAL SETUP

1. Open the Google Assistant on your phone.
2. Select the Compass icon in the bottom right to open the Action Directory.
3. Search for the action you wish to enable.
4. Select that action and you will be prompted to link your account.

SmartHub app will be sent to the provider search where the user can select the provider and then will be taken to the login page.

Amazon Echo devices (Alexa)**AUTOMATIC SETUP**

1. Ask Alexa to talk to SmartHub: "Alexa, let me talk to SmartHub." Alexa will respond: "OK, here's SmartHub. To use it, you'll need to go to the Alexa app and complete setup."
2. A card will appear in the Alexa app that will prompt you to enable the skill and link your account.

MANUAL SETUP

1. Open the Alexa app on your mobile phone or tablet.
2. Select Skills & Games from the menu.
3. Search for "SmartHub."
4. Enable the "SmartHub" skill.
5. Select K.C. Electric Association from drop-down menu.
6. You will be directed to the SmartHub login page — log in using your SmartHub credentials.

CUSTOMER PAYMENTS

Voice Assistant payments may only be made if a customer has a single account.

Customers must set a default Voice Assistant payment method via SmartHub before they may make a payment. This set-up cannot be completed using the SmartHub App. Access SmartHub at www.kcelectric.coop and log into your account. Customers must designate a card or bank account to be the Voice Assistant Default Payment Method on the My Profile > My Information > Manage My Stored Payment Accounts page. Only one method may be selected; however, the customer may change the payment method at any time.



This will only show as an option if a customer has a single account registered.

If you need more information on SmartHub voice assistant, please contact our Hugo office at 719-743-2431.

Claim Your Savings

Each month, members have a chance to claim a \$10 credit on their next electric bill. All you must do is find your account number, call the Hugo office at 719-743-2431 and ask for your credit. The account numbers are listed below. How simple is that?

You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine (check the date on the front cover).

Steven R. Webb, Bethune — 303150003

Robin G. Richie, Flagler — 1107520002

Victor Lopez, Stratton — 915580012

Heritage Baptist Church, Stratton — 921927000

In December 2019, three consumer-members called to claim their savings — Ron Wolfrum, Stratton; Rita Gossett, Hugo; and Dennis Hickman, Seibert.

WILDLIFE WOES WITH ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT

Besides being cute, fun to watch or simply slithery, animals can disrupt power. Although we do all we can to prevent animal interference by using equipment guards, anti roosting devices or other animal-friendly deterrents, sometimes our efforts are no match for persistent and curious critters who use overhead power lines as a super-highway or substations as a nesting ground.

According to the Electrical Engineering Portal, the following classes of animals have caused shorts and subsequent power outages or service disruptions:

1. Squirrels love to use power lines as their overhead highway. They are agile and crafty — oftentimes equipment guards and other deterrents cannot keep them away, much like a squirrel outsmarting a bird feeder. If they touch the power line and pole simultaneously, the electric current travels through them and their demise can cause problems with power transmission.

2. Mice, rats and gophers sometimes cause interruptions in service by gnawing through underground cables. These offenders and others can also try to make a home in a substation, which often does not turn out well for them and can cause a hiccup in power distribution for us.

3. Birds of different species can cause different types of problems. Although small birds can sit on a wire without a problem, some larger varieties like to build nests at the tops of poles, on transmission towers and in substations. Nesting material can cause faults (abnormal electric currents), and bird droppings can contaminate insulators, according to EEP. Other times, large birds with long wing spans can touch a live power line with one wing tip and something else with the other and become a conductor for the voltage to pass through them. This is called “bridging.”



4. Snakes can disrupt service in both substations and underground service. They can squeeze through small spaces, travel upward and have enough length to bridge from one current to another, causing a problem.

5. Fire ants are often classified as animals. Although they are originally from South America, they have migrated to the southern United States and they like to build nests in pad-mounted transformer cabinets. Their presence can cause short circuits and they can eat conductor insulation. Needless to say, they can also make it a challenge to maintain equipment.

6. Large animals like cattle, horses, bison and bears can cause damage to guy wires and poles. They can cause physical damage, creating an outage or making the system more prone to outages in the future. Feisty bears can climb wooden utility poles and make contact with live conductors.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Year in Review [continued from page 7]

K.C. is governed by democratic principles and you, the membership, elect the board of directors to guide and govern the cooperative. Along with approving rates and our annual budget, the board of directors also monitors K.C.'s equity, debt, capital credits and overall financial health. The K.C. Electric Board of Directors and staff continually focus on controlling costs by managing debt, making investments to improve operating efficiencies and implementing technologies to improve internal processes.

The year ahead will continue to bring new challenges both financially and operationally for us, but the board of directors and employees of K.C. Electric continue to do everything in our control to keep expenses down and customer service and reliability high.



February 2020

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: energy.gov