

# Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2020



## MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box Y  
Akron, CO 80720-0570



## STREET ADDRESS

250 Main Avenue  
Akron, CO 80720



**ph** 970-345-2291

**tf** 800-660-2291

**fax** 970-345-2154

**web** [www.ywelectric.coop](http://www.ywelectric.coop)

**Y-W Electric Association, Inc.** is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

## STAY IN THE KNOW

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER

At Y-W Electric Association, Inc., we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for you, our consumer-members.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means, when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages, text messages, social media channels or email — that is, if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

Keeping us updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing and capital credit information. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if we have accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years and it's likely your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that, in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties — it is only used by Y-W Electric Association, Inc., to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by submitting changes through our website, filling in the address change portion of your billing stub or giving us a call at 970-345-2291. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op. [Alex & Kari Beauprez, 3503008410]



▲ Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver. Photo: Scott Van Osdol

## Three Ways to Electrify Your Lawn Care

BY ABBY BERRY

Spring is just around the corner, and you can practically smell the freshly-cut grass. If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider exploring your options.

Gas-powered lawn mowers and trimmers may be your go-to equipment, but times are changing. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

### ELECTRIC LAWN MOWERS

Electric lawn mowers improved over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage,

but now the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines. Cordless electric mowers typically range from \$200 to \$500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require about one to two hours to fully charge. Most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may be best to suit your needs.

### ELECTRIC TRIMMERS

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Traditionally, like

lawn mowers, string trimmers have typically been powered by gas. New versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a backup battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you're interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.

### ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWERS

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you'll need to clear off those walkways and patios for the finishing touch. If you don't want to deal with the maintenance of a gas-powered blower or the restraints of a corded blower, a cordless electric version is a great option.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about \$150 and up.

If you're looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews and check trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you'll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month with less maintenance, hassle and noise, which your neighbors will thank you for.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. [David M. Kembel, 2065006010]



March 2020

## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the refrigerator.

Source: energy.gov



 Jaden Dreher



 Travis Earls

## New Hires

Y-W Electric Association welcomes **Jaden Dreher** to the cooperative. He started his employment with Y-W on January 20, 2020, after previous employment with Lincoln Electric Systems in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jaden is extremely excited to return to the area; he was raised in Akron and is happy to join the Y-W Electric family. Welcome to the family, Jaden.

Y-W Electric Association welcomes **Travis Earls** to the cooperative. He started his employment with Y-W on January 24, 2020, after previous employment with Altitude Energy in Keensburg, Colorado. Travis is excited to join the Y-W Electric family and serve the community that he and his family live in. Welcome to the family, Travis.

## Claim Your Credit

Each month, Y-W Electric offers members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you recognize your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* magazine and pick up the phone. That's all the energy you'll need to claim your energy bucks.

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

Winners claiming \$20 from the January 2020 issue:

- John J. & Alice J. Andrews, 831807700
- Carol Pletcher, 842603101

## Billing Corner

### Self-Serve Website

Have you checked out our website at [www.ywelectric.coop](http://www.ywelectric.coop) lately? Our website gives you the ability to check your monthly usage, payment history and past billing invoices. Payments can also be made on our website using SmartHub. Once you have registered, you can make payments, view your history or contact our office. You can also choose to go paperless. An email will be sent on the day the bills are generated to let you know you have a new bill available. This is only an option. A paper bill will be mailed until you choose not to have one sent.

The SmartHub app can also be downloaded on a mobile device. It is compatible with both Android and iPhones. A payment can be made this way as well.

Y-W Electric does not use a third party for payments. If you are charged for making a payment, this is not being made on Y-W's website. For your security, please make sure you are logged into Y-W's website, [www.ywelectric.coop](http://www.ywelectric.coop), when making a payment or using the SmartHub app.

Please contact our office if you have any questions about our website. [Brian D. Ernst, 591901102]



## Reasons for Rights-of-Way

A right-of-way, when it comes to utilities, is an agreement that allows a utility to use or access a piece of property according to the terms of the easement.

Easements are areas designated for overhead and underground utility access and are usually defined when a lot or neighborhood is first platted. Easements are implemented because it is more efficient and less expensive to run utility lines straight through neighborhoods than it is to run them around parcels of land.

Having right-of-way means that utilities may access the area to fix a utility-related problem or to perform maintenance. Easements outline general property rights by others while right-of-way, as its name implies, is a specific property right.

Workers who service utility lines should arrive in a marked vehicle and have proper identification. If you have any concerns, please call us at 970-345-2291. For more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). [Joseph G. & Carol S. Benjamin, 2002006008]

### A Downed Line Always Means Danger

If you see a downed power line after a bad storm or at an accident scene, never get out to help or go near the downed line. Always assume a downed power line is energized and deadly. This also applies to any electrical equipment, including pad-mounted transformers (aka green boxes) or other utility cabinets or fenced substations.

If you are involved in an accident or snarl with a downed line or other utility equipment — whether in a car, tractor or any other type of vehicle or equipment — do not get out. If you exit the vehicle and walk away, you could be electrocuted. Instead, call 911 and wait for the utility to arrive to cut the power.

If you must leave a vehicle due to smoke or fire, make a solid jump out with your feet together and without touching the car or truck, and then hop away making sure both feet land at the same time — do not walk — at least 30 feet to safety. If you hop, you are less likely to enter two different voltages of electricity at the same time, which causes shock and electrocution.

**For more information** about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### FAQ About Rights-of-Way

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission answers some common questions about rights-of-way:

**Q: Who decides whether an electric utility can cut down a tree near a power line?**

**A:** The choice of how to trim trees and manage vegetation growth near a power line is primarily made by the electric utility, subject to state and local requirements and laws, applicable safety codes and any limitations or obligations specified in rights-of-way agreements.

**Q: The power lines near my house don't seem to be anywhere near the trees, so why is the electric utility trimming my trees anyway?**

**A:** There are two reasons for this. First, electric utilities are required to maintain the appropriate clearance between trees and transmission lines at all times. For example, in the summer, power lines sag as they expand due to air temperature and heavy use and wind can cause lines to sway. Clearances around the lines must account for this. So, on a cool, still day, it may appear that there is ample, or even excessive, clearance that is needed for a hot or windy day.

Second, electric utilities usually prune or remove vegetation to a distance greater than the minimum clearances to account for future growth, movement of trees or power lines due to wind, conductor sag due to heat, line loading and other factors.

**Q: But the trees are in my yard. Why can't I stop the utility from cutting down or trimming my trees?**

**A:** An electric utility is granted an easement or a right-of-way on private property in order to build and maintain electric power lines. Defining the rights of the parties for building and maintaining electric lines are specified in rights-of-way agreements, and these agreements are usually attached to a property deed. [Daisy Lane Farm LLC, 672800403]