

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2020



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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.

ADJUSTING TO CHANGING TIMES

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by the novel coronavirus, I want to assure you that Y-W Electric Association, Inc., is here to help you. Your cooperative has undergone some changes due to the pandemic we find ourselves dealing with. As a critical business, we need to take precautions to ensure we have a healthy workforce to keep the lights on for our members. Protecting the health of our employees and our members is important to our community as a whole.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we have taken in order to keep your power flowing and avoid a viral outbreak at the cooperative. We closed our lobby to the public to prevent the spread of germs. We divided departments between our new and old headquarters buildings so that they can practice social distancing, and some of our employees are working from home.

We separated our line crews from office employees and even from other linemen to limit possible spread of the virus. Trucks were relocated so that lineworkers can head to the job site without coming to the office, and material pick-up times are scheduled to promote crew separation. Area servicemen are working in their two-man crews out of separate trucks to maintain social distance to limit person-to-person contact.

Our staking department is working through new services, service upgrades and system projects as efficiently as possible by communicating with members over the phone instead of in person as much as possible.

These new procedures are designed to minimize social contact. Our management team and board are working constantly to

fine-tune our emergency response plan. This plan has served us well in a variety of circumstances, from ice storms to tornadoes and now the pandemic situation. We are in constant contact with the other electric cooperatives in Colorado and with the Colorado Rural Electric Association, which in turn is working closely with our national association, the state legislature, Gov. Jared Polis and our county emergency managers.

So far, it is working well and everyone has adapted to these operating methods. That's because we've had to adapt before. Nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation. It's kind of like metal that has been refined ... stronger and more beautiful.

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. If you call, the phones will be answered as always. Instead of dropping by the office to conduct business, we are asking members to use our drop box, online and phone payment options, our SmartHub app and the U.S. Postal Service to pay bills. Our talented employees are available to address any needs that you may have. We plan to reopen our lobby and return to normal when the seriousness of the pandemic subsides. We'll keep you updated when we think this can occur.

The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis. All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, and we will get through this together, the cooperative way.

STAY SAFE AT HOME

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for thousands of home fires, injuries, death and property damage. The average American home was built in 1977, and many existing homes simply can't handle the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices. Keep safety in mind with these helpful tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.



Learn the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system:

- Frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses
- Dimming of lights when other devices are turned on
- Buzzing sound from switches or outlets
- Discolored outlets
- Appliances that seem underpowered



How to avoid overloading circuits:

- Label your circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in your home.
- Have your home inspected by a qualified electrician if it is older than 40 years or if you've had a major appliance installed.
- Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices.
- Reduce your electrical load by using energy-efficient appliances and lighting.



Follow these electrical safety tips to keep you and your home safe from electrical hazards.

- Avoid overloading outlets.
- Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire.
- Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage.
- Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip.
- Never run cords under rugs, carpets, doors or windows.
- Make sure cords do not become tripping hazards.
- Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least 3 feet away from heat sources.
- Make sure you use proper wattage for lamps and lighting.
- Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries annually and replace the unit every 10 years.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International [Dennis Baucke, 721401101]

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.)



Consumers claiming \$20 credit from the April 2020 issue:

- **Donald & Susan Crow**
- **Glenn E. Thim Jr.**
- **E. Lynn & Diane I. Hagemeyer**
- **Jason Velder**



June 2020

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference, the more energy you will save.

[Don Deland, 1233101704]



BILLING CORNER

Save on Summer Energy Costs

We live in an area where the temperature in the summer can be extremely hot. We don't always associate high energy bills with summer usage. However, keeping cool in the summer can consume a great deal of power.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME TIPS ON LOWERING YOUR SUMMER ENERGY COSTS

INSULATION: Insulating attics and walls, as well as weatherizing doors and windows, is key to preventing conditioned air from escaping your home.

FANS: Using as little energy as a 100-watt bulb, ceiling fans are an easy and energy-efficient way to keep things cool.

PLANT TREES: Summer is the season for home improvements. Plant deciduous (leafy) trees near south- and west-facing windows. They will shade your home during the warm summer months and when the leaves fall off in the winter they will allow the sun to heat your home.

LIGHTS: Replace incandescent lightbulbs with light emitting diodes, or LED bulbs, which emit less heat and cut your lighting costs in half. LEDs also last a minimum of 48,000 hours longer than an incandescent bulb.

REFRIGERATOR: Resist the urge to stand in front of the refrigerator with the door open. The refrigerator is one of the most energy-consuming appliances in the home; less time with the door open means less energy spent keeping your food at a cooler temperature.

AIR CONDITIONING: Keep your thermostat at 78 degrees instead of 73 degrees and save up to 5 percent on your energy bill.

FILTERS: Vacuum or replace refrigerated air filters once a month during the cooling season. Easy airflow means more efficient use of your cooling dollars.

DISHWASHER: Use the "no heat" option for your drying cycle and run the dishwasher only when it is fully loaded. A hot dishwasher will warm your home and increase your electricity bill at the same time.

If you have any questions or concerns about your bill, please contact the billing department at 1-800-660-2291, or if in the Akron area, 970-345-2291. Please have a safe summer.

[Delbert & Patricia Liming Living Trust, 891501400]

A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Ensure your children are protected from the electrical service connection to your home. Keep ladders or long poles stowed and away from youngsters who might be tempted to use them, as they could reach the wires connected to your house. If you have a room or deck addition, make sure the service connection remains well out of reach. **Contact Y-W Electric if you are unsure the distance is safe.** [Marty J. & Shannon J. Greek, 1333111100]



Farmer and Rancher Safety

We don't have to remind those who work the land and raise livestock that they have a potentially dangerous occupation. However, due to the nature of the job and because of long days of tiring work, some safety precautions are worthy of repeating. Here are some reminders about electrical dangers on the farm or ranch.

IF YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE, DON'T GET OUT

If you make contact with a power line, guy wire, power pole, electrical box or any other electrical equipment, do not get out of your cab or truck. Stay put and call 911 to dispatch our utility crew to de-energize the power.

If you must get out due to smoke or fire, make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle, and hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. Or, after you make a clean exit, shuffle or waddle away while keeping your feet together and on the ground.

Once you are out, never try to re-enter the cab or truck until it is cleared by the utility crew.

Remember: If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line or other

utility equipment, do not get out of the cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground. Call 911 and wait for us to arrive and cut the power so that you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.

DETERMINE PROPER CLEARANCE

Contact us to measure power line heights; do not do this yourself. Once you know the heights, you can determine safe clearances of your equipment. Always maintain at least 10 feet between the power line and the tallest height of the equipment that will be transported. Keep in mind that, due to wear, age and even weather conditions, power lines can change height. Please contact us with any concerns. It's good to know power line clearance, but always have a spotter.

CALL US BEFORE MOVING OR ADDING A GRAIN BIN

The National Electrical Safety Code addresses grain bins and their proximity to power lines with extremely specific requirements. The requirements are in place to help keep farmers safe — to decrease the chances of farming equipment and machinery coming in contact with power lines. If you are planning on building a new grain bin or remodeling around an area that already has

one, contact us at Y-W Electric at 970-345-2291. We can help with specific code requirements. The taller a grain bin, the farther it must be placed from a power line.

ALWAYS DIG SAFELY

Whether you are installing new fence posts or using large tillage tools, call 811 before you dig to have underground utilities marked. Even if you think you know where buried gas, power and other lines are, don't rely on your memory. Get all utilities marked so you know for sure. (Note: Utility locators dispatched by 811 do not mark private lines.)

USE STANDBY GENERATORS WITH CARE

If you have a standby generator to provide essential power during an outage, be sure to correctly use the transfer switch. Once you properly engage the switch, it stops your farm's generated power from entering utility lines (backfeeding), which can electrocute lineworkers who are working to restore power.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. [Chester A. Wieser Jr. Trust 1, 1090900501]