

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

AUGUST 2021

MAILING ADDRESS

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STREET ADDRESS

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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.

HELP US REACH YOU

BY ANDREW MOLT DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES



ANDREW MOLT

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 our consumer-members. (That's you!)

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 that 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 consumer-members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed 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 consumer-members through automated phone messages, text messages or email, if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

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

Many of you have been consumer-members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that 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. This can be done by calling our office at 970-345-2291 or 800-660-2291, as well as looking over the information on your billing invoice.

If either the phone number or mailing address is incorrect, check the box on the bottom left side of your invoice and correct the information in the space provided on the back. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all consumer-members of the co-op.

Farmers: Rest Up For Harvest Safety

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says, "all of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

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-Josie Rudolphi

Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. Ron Kraich, Jr. 2005006063

Claim Your Credit

Each month, Y-W Electric offers consumer-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.)

The following consumer-members claimed \$20 from the June Issue:

- Carl and Cindy Brown
- Floyd and Dorene Reese
- Dawn Amos

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning happen each year. To prevent this from happening to you, avoid using equipment such as generators, charcoal grills and camp stoves that can cause CO to build up in your home.

- Never use a generator or gasoline-powered or coal-burning equipment inside your home, basement or garage. Keep such items outside and at least 20 feet from any window, door or vent.
- Never run a vehicle inside an attached garage, even with the garage door up.
- Never go without CO detectors in your home. Detectors that feature battery backup are a good idea for times when the power goes out.
- Be aware of the symptoms of CO poisoning — there are many, but they include headaches, difficulty breathing and feeling lightheaded or drowsy.

Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

BY ABBY BERRY

ABBY BERRY WRITES ON CONSUMER AND COOPERATIVE AFFAIRS FOR THE NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION.

◀ In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 power outages. Photo Source: Carina Hofmeister

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave oven clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or "blink." While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts — this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like heating and cooling systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning, and can cause damage to power lines and transformers.

Y-W Electric Association encourages all consumer-members to install surge protective devices, such as surge protector power strips, to safeguard your sensitive

electronics. If you experience frequent surges in your home or business and believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, our Y-W Electric Association crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. You can help, too. Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 970-345-2291 or visiting www.ywelectric.coop. Dan Drullinger Family Trust 982808801



▲ Lightning strikes can cause faults (short circuits) on power lines, which can cause your power to blink. Photo Credit: Pat Gaines Thomas P. Kitchin 2045003516

Y-W ELECTRIC WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEE



Y-W Electric Association welcomes Casey Krening to the cooperative. He started his employment with Y-W on June 1. Casey was raised in the Akron area and is grateful for the opportunity to return to his old stomping grounds. Casey and his wife, Hannah, just welcomed their first child to the world. His hobbies include spending time outdoors hunting, fishing and golfing. Welcome to the co-op family, Casey.

Billing Corner

On Time Bill Paying

Each year, Y-W Electric must write off the balances left unpaid by consumer-members disconnecting their services. While this amount is not an exceptionally large amount, the cost to the cooperative is a burden carried by all consumer-members. This cost has been lowered by doing three things. The first, doing a better job collecting amounts due. Second, administering a more consistent deposit procedure. Third, educating our consumer-members so they realized that paying the electric bill is as important as paying the mortgage.

Many times, paying your bills is a simple matter of priorities. Obviously, shelter is the number one priority for most people. Next would be heat, lights, food and basic clothing. Y-W Electric thinks your electric bill payment should be taken as seriously as your mortgage or rent payment. Paying on time helps the co-op's cash flow, and helps the cooperative run as efficiently as possible, plus it helps to keep rates as low as possible. When you pay late or don't pay at all, you affect the rest of the Y-W consumer-members.

We have an average of 750 consumer-members each month that receive delinquent notices. Over 1,200 notices are printed. The cost of these notices and the postage required is a cost to the cooperative that is paid by all consumer-members. Sometimes, it is simply a mail delay; however, over 100 consumer-members each month require another contact. This is by telephone, direct lineman contact or a door tag. Our collection employees treat everyone with respect while they impress on the consumer-member that payment is needed to prevent disconnection.

Y-W Electric has over 3,700 consumer-members, with over 8,500 meter locations. At least 80% pay on time. We truly appreciate those consumer-members who treat their electric bill with the seriousness it deserves. We hope consumer-members who wait for that extra nudge to pay their bill will come to understand that a late bill payment is a cost that affects the amount everyone has to pay for electric service. By paying on time, every consumer-member avoids the possibility of a contact charge, or even an after-hours charge for reconnection.

If you need help with your bills, call the billing department. Payment options are available, including budget plans and automatic bank payment plans. Help us keep our costs at a minimum so everyone will benefit being a consumer-member of Y-W Electric Association. Richard L. and Shirley Travis 2012008000



August 2021

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Source: energy.gov

Ryan W. and Ronella Noble 750101002



Plan for Proper Tree Planting

The best time to plant a tree is March 15 through June 15 or September 1 through October 15, according to the Colorado State Forest Service (csfs.colostate.edu).

If you plan to plant a tree this fall, be sure to select an appropriate location to stay clear of power lines and consider fire prevention strategies.

For more tree planting tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.