

# K.C. ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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## K.C. ELECTRIC STAFF

David Churchwell  
General Manager

dchurchwell@kcelectric.coop

Bo Randolph

Office Manager and CFO  
brandolph@kcelectric.coop

Paul Norris

Operations Manager  
pnorris@kcelectric.coop

George Ehlers

Member Services Specialist and  
IT Manager  
gehlers@kcelectric.coop



ph 719-743-2431

tf 800-700-3123

fax 719-743-2396

web kcelectric.coop

**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.

# FIVE REASONS WE LOVE SERVING OUR MEMBERS

BY DAVID CHURCHWELL  
GENERAL MANAGER



DAVID CHURCHWELL

February may be the shortest month, but it is packed with special observances like Presidents Day, Black History Month, Valentine's Day, and a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of, such as "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it has become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy and, of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day is not just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them — with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of K.C. Electric Association.

- **We love serving our consumer-members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.** Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, low-cost and safe electricity. Simply put, K.C. Electric exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1946 to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.
- **You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back.** A major part of our mission is to serve our communities and support their efforts for the greater good.
- **Consumer-members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors.** They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify

immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

- **You help us get it right.** K.C. Electric consumer-members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curve ball; our consumer-members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. We also appreciate your feedback on co-op programs and participation in our grassroots program. Your opinions and support are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for that.

- **You and other K.C. Electric consumer-members make up the community we serve — and for us, it's all about community.** Our employees live and work here too and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why K.C. Electric donates to local charities and schools and funds several scholarships. It's also why we invest in economic development and why you'll see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our consumer-members and our local community and just like you, we want to see it continue to thrive.

# Five Ways to Save Energy When Working from Home

BY ABBY BERRY

Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day.

If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills.

Here are five simple ways to save energy when working from home.

## 1. Use a smart power strip.

Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.

## 2. Unplug your least-used equipment.

If your home office includes equipment such as printers and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices, since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.

## 3. Choose Energy Star–certified office equipment.

If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the Energy Star label to ensure you're getting the most energy-efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the Energy Star rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.

## 4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead.

It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun. When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in — and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use.

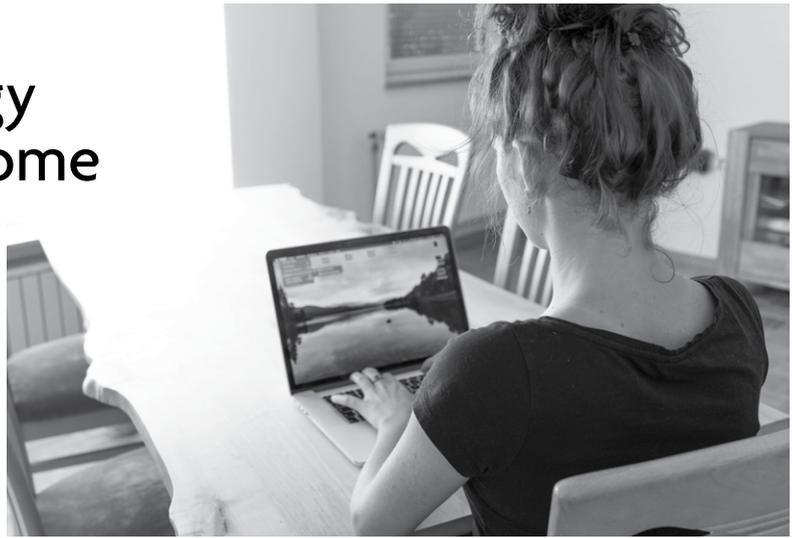
## 5. Lower the thermostat.

Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn down the thermostat a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, which is all the more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills. Whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use.

Contact K.C. Electric at 719-743-2431 if you have questions about your bills or want additional information about saving energy at home.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



## Claim Your Savings

Each month, K.C. Electric consumer-members have a chance to claim a \$20 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).

**Winnie Fritzler, Flagler — 1107830001**  
**Connie Mayfield, Hugo — 641500006**  
**Dallas Saffer, Flagler — 520500000**  
**Melissa Ross, Cheyenne Wells — 409300001**

In December 2021, three consumer-members called to claim their savings: Sam Emmerling, Hugo; Gary Eagleton, Seibert; and Karen Gregg, Cheyenne Wells.

# United Power Cannot Stick Fellow Cooperative Members With Their Bill

*The following is adapted from a column written by Morgan County REA General Manager David Frick.*

Upstanding consumer-members of electric cooperatives would be mortified if part of their monthly power bills were sent to their neighbors to be paid. In eastern Colorado's farming and ranching communities, it's not cliché to say that neighbors help neighbors, but it's safe to say we are proud to responsibly pay our own way.

That's why consumer-members of electric cooperatives in eastern Colorado and across the West may be surprised to learn that their electricity bills could rise because of the actions of United Power.

United Power and 41 other not-for-profit utility members of cooperative power supplier Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association voluntarily signed power supply contracts, agreeing to share the costs of delivering electricity into their distribution systems. We agreed to share Tri-State's costs for building and maintaining the transmission system, power plants and everything else required to deliver us reliable power. In 2007, we, along with United Power and all but two of our fellow members, elected, voluntarily, to extend our wholesale power contracts with Tri-State for an additional 10 years, all the way to 2050. Now United Power wants out of the contract it signed decades early, and it wants out at the expense of other members.

In the past several years, United Power has been starting fights in every venue it can find to terminate its power supply contract with Tri-State at such a low cost that electric rates would rise for all the other utility members of Tri-State, including K.C. Electric Association. While United Power claims they want a strong Tri-State, it's working to weaken Tri-State, and this affects our consumer-members.

If United Power were successful in terminating its power supply contract at such a low cost, this would harm other Tri-State members, whose consumer-members will see their power costs rise as they pay for the costs that United Power consumer-members will no longer pay.

We think that's wrong, and I suspect many of our neighbors who are United Power consumer-members would agree. They may likely be embarrassed if their neighbors' electricity costs rose because of their own electric cooperative's actions.

Tri-State serves its cooperative members with reliable, affordable and responsible power, including reducing wholesale power rates and increasing clean energy, even as other utilities in the region raise rates.

What is essential to know is that Tri-State's members are working together to address United Power's concerns by creating options to allow members to self-supply more power or even terminate their contracts early if they make the remaining members whole. This is an issue among Tri-State's members and not, as United Power would have you believe, an issue between it and Tri-State. As we all work together, we want to make sure that if a fellow member terminates the long-term contract it signed, that action doesn't cause other members' rates to increase. This is also an important issue for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Tri-State's rate regulator, to consider as it examines the importance of power supply contracts — the financial backbone allowing wholesale cooperative suppliers like Tri-State to finance, build and operate their generation and transmission systems for their members.

United Power characterizes its concerns with a banal analogy to the Eagles' "Hotel California," when really its goal is to check out of its hotel room early and stick the other guests with its bill. Instead, the consumer-members of United Power should take a close look at their cooperative's actions and ask United Power to work with its fellow members to reach a solution to its needs that doesn't raise the power costs of their neighbors.



## Bedazzle them with Balloons ... Safely

Metallic balloons make great Valentine's Day presents, but you must dispose of them in the trash. Do not release them outdoors, or you could cause a power outage and damage utility electrical equipment. Because of the metallic coating, they conduct electricity and can short out circuits in your community's power system. You and your neighbors could lose power, traffic lights could go out, and entire blocks of homes and businesses could go dark.

Source: SafeElectricity.org

# Q & A WITH THE BOARD: TERRY TAGTMEYER



*This is the sixth in a series that will run here in Colorado Country Life and is one way for consumer-members to become familiar with their K.C. Electric Association Board of Directors. This month we hear from Terry Tagtmeyer, who has served on the board for 21 years and represents Kit Carson County.*

**Tell us about yourself, your family and your history in our community.**

I moved with my parents to Seibert, Colorado, in 1952 from Goodland, Kansas. I grew up on the family dairy farm. I married Janet Livingston in 1972. We are parents of three children and grandparents to eight grandchildren. I now work as a crop insurance adjuster for AgriSompo North America.

**Why did you decide to run for a K.C. director position?**

My father Henry retired from the K. C. Board of Directors, and I decided to run for his position.

**What strengths have you brought to the K.C. Board of Directors?**

I served on other boards, both cooperative and non-cooperative, always believing in the cooperative principle.

**What are the major challenges you believe K.C. Electric will face in the future?**

The challenges to K.C. Electric are greatest from the outside, such as influences from state and national legislation, changes at Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and Republican River mandates and issues.

**What are your thoughts on the status of the electric industry in Colorado?**

The reliability, affordability and availability of power in Colorado.

**What industry changes do you believe will affect the electric industry in the next 10 years?**

I believe K. C. Electric will lose reliability as electric power may not be available or at what cost.

**What do you feel you want to accomplish as a director for K.C. Electric Association?**

Short term: Continue the safe work environment. Long term: Maintain reliable and affordable power.

**What is the greatest concern you have for the electric industry and how it will impact eastern Colorado?**

Change will always happen: How fast the changes occur, and at what cost; the loss of irrigation load; regulations and mandates from both state and federal legislation; and electric power from unknown and unreliable sources.

## It's American Heart Month: Every Step Counts

February is American Heart Month and a good time to take stock of your activity, or, for some of us, the lack thereof.

Many people have good intentions to move more, but then the day unfolds with little else other than chair time. You get to work and have that sit-down meeting; a nice co-worker brings in doughnuts; and the day is filled with several work fires to put out. You vow to move more tomorrow, but the same cycle continues.

Instead of waiting for another day, find easy ways to increase movement today. The American Heart Association offers seven simple ways to boost your activity level with no gym membership required — although a gym is also a good way to get moving.

1. Grab the leash and walk your dog. Both you and your four-legged friend will be healthier for it.
  2. Take a walk with someone you love. It is a great way to get face time without screens.
  3. Try a 10-minute home workout. Exercising in shorter increments can improve your health because the time spent moving adds up. People usually have an extra 10 minutes here or there throughout the day but may not be able to find a solid 30 minutes or an hour to exercise.
  4. Walk and talk. Or walk and work. Walk while you are on the phone or use a walking desk at work. If it is nice outside, have a walking meeting.
  5. Tune into fitness. Walk or jog in place, lift weights or do yoga while you binge watch your favorite television shows.
  6. Ditch the car. Park farther away from the building to get in extra steps, or bike or walk to your destination.
  7. Take the stairs, even if just for a floor or two. The elevator may go up, but your heart rate will not as you press the floor number and listen to nondescript, piped-in music.
- Stop putting off until tomorrow what you can do today. Look for opportunities to move more. Your heart will thank you.