

# K.C. ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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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.

# WHAT IS NET METERING?

BY DAVID CHURCHWELL GENERAL MANAGER

Occasionally, we receive questions from members regarding installing solar panels at their home or business to offset their electric usage, so I want to use this space to explain how K.C. Electric Association's net metering procedure works.

The first question you may have is, "What is net metering?" Net metering is a way of measuring the electricity output of member-owned renewable generation, such as solar panels or a small wind turbine. Net metering means that the member's meter rolls forward when the consumer uses power and rolls backward when the member sends excess electricity back to the electric grid.

In Colorado, electric cooperative net-metering requirements are governed by state statutes and the Public Utilities Commission interconnection standards. Colorado interconnection standards are intended to protect the safety of the members and our employees by requiring approved equipment and availability on the distribution circuit to be interconnected.

Colorado statute requires all electric cooperatives to allow interconnection of a net-metered generator of a renewable resource up to 10 kilowatts for residential accounts, and up to 25 kW for a commercial account; and the size of the system must not be greater than the energy used by the member at the installation location. We use the average of the last three years' usage at the installation location to determine the allowable size of the system. The system must also be sized to not negatively impact the reliability of our distribution system.

For a net-metered account, in any billing month where the electric energy supplied to the generating facility exceeds the electric energy generated, K.C. Electric will bill the member for the energy provided by the association at the same rate that all other consumers are charged who are in the same rate class. The member will also be billed the monthly facility charge for their rate class. The facility charge covers the cost of our fixed charges such as poles, wires, transformers, substations and maintenance.

In any billing period when the electric energy generated exceeds the amount of energy supplied to the generating facility, the excess energy will be banked and carried forward from month to month and applied on a one-to-one basis against the electric energy consumed by the generating facility in any subsequent billing period. The member will be billed the monthly facility charge for their rate class.

For a net-metered account, within 60 days of the end of the annual period, K.C. Electric will pay, by check, to the member any remaining credited kilowatt-hour balance accumulated during the annual period on a one-to-one basis, reducing the banked kWh to zero, an amount equal to the wholesale energy costs of the association.

Installing a solar or wind system can be a significant investment. When deciding whether this is a smart investment, there are a couple of resources that will help you determine your pay-back period. One website I recommend was developed by Colorado State University and can be found at [www.solar.dev-rocket.com](http://www.solar.dev-rocket.com). You will be asked a few simple questions; the program will do a cost/benefit calculation and give you a 20-year cash flow analysis, which will indicate when or if your project will have a net return. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory has a solar calculator at [pvwatts.nrel.gov](http://pvwatts.nrel.gov) that will show



DAVID CHURCHWELL

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

you the projected output of a solar project at your address; and then you will have to do the cost/benefit analysis yourself to determine how many years it will take for the system to have a net return.

As an example, I utilized CSU's solar calculator and entered the information required for owning a roof-mounted solar system that generates 9,096 kWhs annually, which is the amount of electricity an average K.C. Electric town residential member uses. According to the calculator, a 5.9 kW solar system would be sufficient to generate 9,096 kWhs on an annual basis; and the cash flow

analysis indicated that it would take 17 years for the system to pay for itself, and the net present value was a negative \$2,333.

If you are interested in reducing your electric bill, there may be other options instead of installing solar panels or a small wind turbine. Changing your lightbulbs to LEDs, installing high-efficiency appliances, adding insulation to your house, installing a smart thermostat and replacing or sealing leaky windows are all ways to reduce your lighting and heating costs. K.C. Electric has rebates available for members to utilize as you make your home or business more efficient.

On our website at [www.kcelectric.coop](http://www.kcelectric.coop), you will find our net metering schedule, generating facility agreement and an application for a residential or a commercial installation. There are two net metering applications: 10 kW for a residential account, and 25 kW for a commercial account.

This process can be complicated with some installations. I highly recommend that you call us prior to initiating a renewable project or signing a contract with an installation company. We can help guide you to ensure that you fully understand how the process works and to help the project go smoothly.

## YOUR VOTE COUNTS

# Five Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty

America's electric cooperatives, including K.C. Electric Association, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. There are many important policy issues that directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While K.C. Electric is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. Through our non-partisan grassroots program known as "Co-ops Vote," we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. There's power in numbers, and when we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

National Voter Registration Day is September 20, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or simply make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty:

Don't assume your voter registration status is up to date. Visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop), then click "Election Resources" to verify your status.

Get informed. In addition to ensuring your registration is up to date, learning

about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote.

Get active on social media. Follow @coopvote on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady; encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Help others prepare to vote. Work a National Voter Registration Day event (visit [nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events](http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events)); volunteer to be a poll worker during midterm elections; or offer to drive others to their polling places.

Vote! It's the easiest and most important way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

To join K.C.'s grassworks program, visit our website at [www.kcelectric.coop](http://www.kcelectric.coop), click on the Community tab, and then click on "Become a Member of the Grassroots Program".

We encourage everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact.



## 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).

- **Leo Hurtado, Hugo** — 632300007
- **Earl Helm, Cheyenne Wells** — 1115890000
- **Melisa Coldiron, Seibert** — 813450003
- **Karen Fehrenbach, Stratton** — 1112780001

In July, two consumer-members called to claim their savings: Brackford Mann, Burlington, and Rodney Bancroft, Seibert.

# What is a Generator **TRANSFER SWITCH?**

A transfer or throw switch, sometimes called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.

## **The transfer switch has an important job.**

The switch is typically used for generators rated at 5,000 watts or more.

It connects the generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.

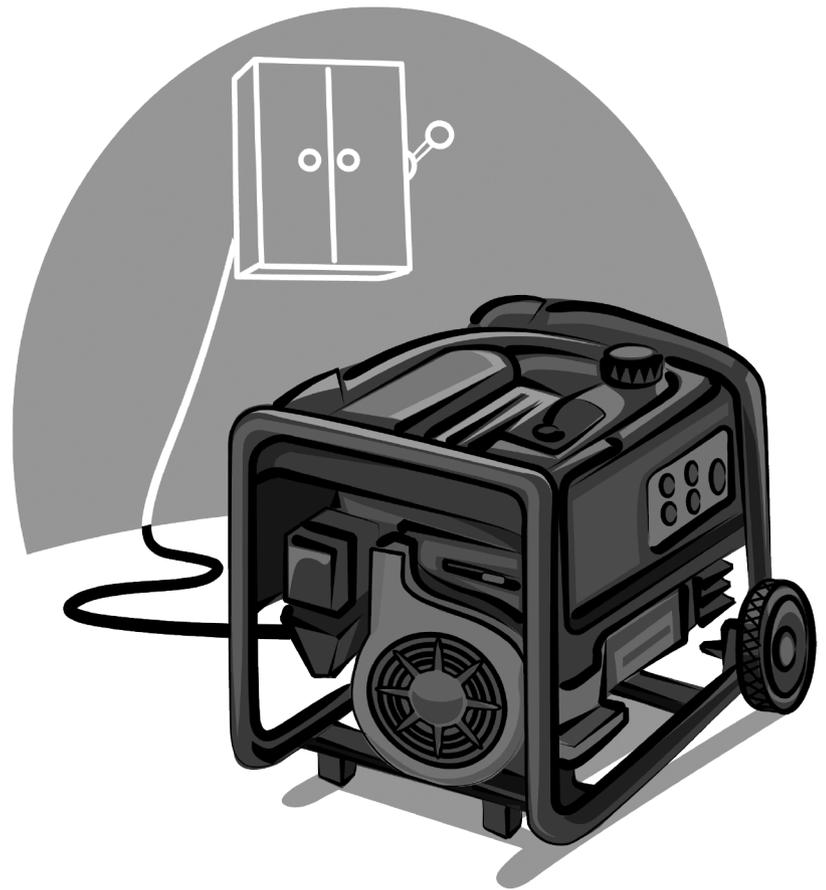
In other words, the transfer switch changes or transfers the power load from one source to another.

It prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

## **The type of switch depends on the type of generator.**

A permanent standby generator has an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home.

Standby generators are called just that because they automatically turn on when the power goes out.



Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

Portable generators can also be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

## **Always use a generator safely.**

Learn more at:

The logo for Safe Electricity.org, featuring the word "Safe" in a bold, sans-serif font above the word "Electricity.org" in a larger, bold, sans-serif font. A stylized plug icon is integrated into the letter "E" of "Electricity.org".

# HAY IS FOR HORSES



## USE IT WITH CARE NEAR POWER LINES

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Using hay on the ranch or farm is like using water and feed — it is essential. However, be careful near overhead power lines. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind:

- Be aware of overhead power lines when moving bales of hay.
- Do not store hay bales underneath power lines.
- Bales could get close to or contact a power line, pole or guy wire.



## IN ADDITION:

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- Tarps that cover hay can come loose in heavy winds.
- The tarp can then whip in the wind.
- The unruly tarp could contact a power line and cause an outage.

Learn more:

 Safe  
Electricity.org®