

HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

The Beacon

OCTOBER 2023



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facebook.com/HighlineElectric

Our mission is to provide our members with reliable, high-quality electricity and other needed services, which will improve their economic and social well-being and provide significant long-range benefits for our communities, our state and our nation.



HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER



Touchstone Energy®

PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

BY DENNIS HERMAN GENERAL MANAGER
AND ALEX ASTLEY ENGINEERING MANAGER

In today's world, many of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones, and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms, and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting valuables such as your identity, banking and health records, and more from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin spice lattes, crisper air, and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Taking necessary steps

to protect our private information is a year-round practice, and at Highline Electric Association, we use this month to share helpful cybersecurity reminders with everyone and let you know how Highline is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection), below are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. **Implement multi-factor authentication** (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. This requires you to confirm a login attempt with another service, often by entering a code which is sent to you either by text message or email. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, your accounts should remain inaccessible if multi-factor verification is enabled.
2. **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. **Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid replying to emails (or texts) that make offers too good to be true, sound urgent, have typos, or include unusual requests.
4. **Create strong passwords** using long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a reputable password manager to save time. They work across all devices, protect your identity, and notify you of potential phishing websites.

FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature and permanence of the internet. Kids and teens need to learn early on that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, teach your children about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.



DENNIS HERMAN



ALEX ASTLEY

[continued on page 6]

PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

[continued from page 5]

KEEPING THE ELECTRIC GRID AND YOUR DATA SECURE

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Highline employees receive regular cyber threat training, and we are following through on all four of the suggestions described above. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Highline, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear; upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather; and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure. We participate with IT professionals from other cooperatives to simulate realistic cyber issues and practice responding to the latest types of issues we might have to manage.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. If we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.

October Employee Anniversaries

Congratulations to these Highline Electric Association employees celebrating a work anniversary in October:

- Lukas Bracelin – 6 years
- Tadius Huser – 5 years
- Justin Wert – 4 years
- Christopher Yanez – 2 years

MEET YOUR HEA DIRECTORS



Your Highline Electric Association Board of Directors is composed of 11 people who are cooperative members just like you. Each board member is elected to represent HEA members across their respective districts. In the rapidly changing electric industry, it's important to have a strong board of directors who steer the cooperative with sound decision-making. This month, meet Lisa Schilke, who joined the HEA board of directors in February 2023.

Lisa is no stranger to the area: She was born and raised in Holyoke. She married her husband Tim nearly 35 years ago, and they live near Lamar, Nebraska. The Schilkes farm in Nebraska and Colorado, growing corn, wheat, and soybeans. Their daughter Kayla lives in Omaha, Nebraska, where she works as a nurse. And Lisa and Tim's son Derek farms with them when he's not spending time with his wife Mykaela and six-month-old daughter, Bryndal. Lisa keeps busy bookkeeping for their farming business and spending time with their granddaughter.

After earning her bachelor's degree in elementary education, Lisa worked as a substitute teacher at Chase County Schools for many years. She currently serves as Vice Chairman on the Holyoke/Imperial Credit Union Board of Directors and is active in her church and church council.

"My time on the HEA board has been informative and I have learned a great deal," Lisa says. "I am looking forward to representing District 4, expanding my knowledge, and supporting the cooperative mission of Highline."

Highline Electric Association appreciates your dedication and commitment to the co-op and the board of directors — thank you, Lisa.

LOAD CONTROL UPDATES

Load Control for 2023 is over. Please note these important dates for Highline Electric's 2024 Load Control Program.

Letters will be sent to all irrigators next month. All irrigation wells that were in the 2023 Load Control Program will be automatically enrolled in the 2024 program on the same option unless Highline is notified by February 28, 2024. Included in the letter will be a fact sheet detailing each load control option. If you have changes for the 2024 program, including tenant changes, please call the Highline office and contracts will be sent to you.

The deadline to return executed contracts for the 2024 Load Control Program is February 28. No option changes, additions, or deletions will be allowed after February 28, 2024.

Watch for your letter and please notify us of any changes you want for the 2024 program.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR HOME HEATING COSTS THIS WINTER?

Nebraska's **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program** helps low-income households stay safe and healthy by providing financial assistance to offset the costs of home heating.

LIHEAP particularly helps households that pay a high portion of household income for home energy to meet immediate home energy needs. Heating season runs from October 1 to March 31. Nebraskans can apply to receive assistance from



LIHEAP by calling ACCESSNebraska at 1-800-383-4278 or filling out an application via the ACCESSNebraska website <https://dhhs-access-neb-menu.ne.gov/start/?tl=en>



Colorado's Low-income Energy Assistance Program is a federally funded program that helps eligible hard-working Colorado families, seniors, and individuals pay a portion of their winter home heating costs. The goal is to help bring warmth, comfort, and safety to homes and families by assisting with heating costs. LEAP will begin accepting applications for the 2023/2024 season on November 1, 2023. Please call 1-866-HEAT-HELP (1-866-432-8435) for more information.



COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Highline Electric adheres seven cooperative principles:

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Members' economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training, and information;
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community

**CELEBRATE
CO-OP MONTH
WITH HIGHLINE!**



Join us for a free, member-only

MOVIE



Hotel Transylvania
Sunday, October 15
1 p.m.
Hippodrome
Arts Centre
Julesburg

Hotel Transylvania 2
Sunday, October 22
1 p.m.
Peerless Movie Theater
Holyoke

Set Up Auto Pay Today

Call Highline's office at 970-854-2236 to set up auto pay for your electric bill.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY:

Prevent grass and brush fires



Grass and brush fires can travel up to **15.5 miles per hour** and can spread to tens of thousands of acres within a few hours of ignition.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

Grass and brush are fuels for fire, making fires involving ground cover and foliage extremely dangerous and destructive. Grass and brush fires, which are often generalized as wildfires in the U.S., can travel up to 15.5 miles per hour and can spread across tens of thousands of acres within a few hours of ignition. In North America, grass and brush fires can occur year-round and can occur anywhere that weather conditions are dry and winds are high.

Grass and brush fires can start naturally when lightning strikes the ground and sparks a fire. However, 85% of wildfires are caused by humans; who burn trash or leaves, use hot equipment on grass, improperly discard cigarettes, leave campfires unattended, or intentionally set a fire.

To keep your family safe from grass and brush fires, follow these safety tips:

- Be aware of any Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches issued by the National Weather Service.
- Never build a campfire, shoot fireworks, burn trash, use a barbecue pit, or initiate a controlled burn when warnings are in effect. Before engaging in any of these activities, check local ordinances.

- If engaging in these activities, never leave the area unattended and keep a shovel, bucket of water, fire extinguisher, or other fire suppression tools on hand.
- If you see a downed power line or other damaged electrical equipment, notify Highline Electric immediately by calling 970-854-2236. Never approach a downed power line or try to move one; stay at least 50 feet away from the area and warn others to do the same.
- Do not park cars, trucks, boats, or recreational vehicles on dry grass or shrubs. Always keep vehicles properly maintained to avoid sparking and overheating.
- Use an approved spark arrester on all internal combustion engine-powered equipment used on your property, such as lawnmowers, chainsaws, tractors, and trimmers. Check and replace spark arresters periodically.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

HOW TO CONTROL A CONTROLLED BURN

Controlled burns can often get out of hand and quickly accelerate. When planning controlled burns, follow these safety tips:

- Be sure to acquire any necessary safety permits and follow any local ordinances related to controlled burns.
- Notify your local fire department and neighbors about the controlled burn ahead of time.
- Do not initiate a controlled burn during a Red Flag Warning, Fire Weather Watch, or any other fire ban.
- Clear all vegetation and weeds at least 4 feet around the base of any electric utility pole in the affected area, then wet the base of the poles with water before beginning your burn.

After any controlled burn, be sure to inspect the electric utility poles for damage. Fire damage is usually evident by blackening or scorch marks. However, even slight discoloration can indicate a serious problem. The poles may burn from the inside out and the damage is not immediately apparent.

If your fire gets out of control, spreads too close to a power pole, or causes the pole to catch on fire, call 911 and Highline Electric Association at 970-854-2236.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact Highline Electric at 970-854-2236.



REMINDER:
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIMES ENDS
November 5.