

HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

The Beacon

DECEMBER 2023



MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 57
Holyoke, CO 80734-0057



STREET ADDRESS

1300 S. Interoccean
Holyoke, CO 80734



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fax 844-996-1318

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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.

NEW OVID OFFICE HOURS:
HEA's Ovid office is open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on bill due dates.



HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER



Touchstone Energy®

RELIABLE POWER FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

BY DENNIS HERMAN GENERAL MANAGER



DENNIS HERMAN

Ringing in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the general manager of Highline Electric Association, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the co-op.

Our team at Highline is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering — and empowering — our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

How are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across our service territory in northeast Colorado and southwest Nebraska. You may not realize it, but with the exception of a few small, local projects, Highline doesn't generate the electricity we sell. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of 60% coal, 26% renewables, and 6% natural gas. The

balance of our power supply comes from the purchases Tri-State makes from other power producers.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Highline is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions, and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Highline save money with real-time data and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. We use infrared scanning to identify loose or weak connections that can be repaired before they fail. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops and public power districts in

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RELIABLE POWER

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Colorado, Nebraska, and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Highline will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve — for today and tomorrow.

ATTENTION IRRIGATORS

In early January, landowners will receive a notice in the mail regarding Highline Electric Association's load control program detailing property wells currently enrolled in load control, as well as any eligible wells.

Irrigation accounts that are enrolled will receive a discount on the energy portion (kilowatt-hour usage) of their bill depending on which load control option is selected. Please note: wells that are enrolled in this program, regardless of which option is chosen, will never be controlled on consecutive days.

If you and your landowners want to remain enrolled in the same load control option(s) in 2024 that you had in 2023, your landowners do not need to do anything. **Irrigation wells that were enrolled in 2023 will be carried over into the 2024 program on the same option unless we are notified by February 28, 2024.**

Please call Highline Electric at 970-854-2236, toll-free at 800-816-2236, or email us at info@hea.coop.

ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

An election will be held for four director positions on March 26, 2024, at Highline Electric Association's Annual Meeting. These positions require that the nominee be a member of Highline Electric and comply with Article III, Section 3 of the association's bylaws.

There will be two director positions from District 1; the nominees must reside in Logan, Weld, Washington, or Morgan County, Colorado. The incumbent director for this district is Jim Lueck.

There will be one director position from District 2, and the nominee must reside in Phillips or Yuma County, Colorado. The incumbent director for this district is Mike Bennett.

There will be one director position from District 3, and the nominee must reside in Sedgwick County, Colorado, or Deuel County, Nebraska. The incumbent director for this district is David Carlson.

There will be one director position from District 4, and the nominee must reside in Chase, Perkins, or Dundy County, Nebraska. The incumbent director for this district is Merlin Prior.

Petitions to nominate a director are available at all Highline Electric offices. Anyone nominated for a board of directors' position must comply with the following rules:

1. The person nominated must comply with Article III, Section 3 of the bylaws, a copy of which may be obtained from any Highline Electric office.
2. A minimum of 15 signatures is required for nomination. Each member signing the petition must reside in the same district as the person being nominated.
3. Only members of Highline may sign said petition. If the membership is in joint tenancy, only one tenant may sign.
4. Circulators of said petition should attempt to verify the correctness of the name and address of each signer and must require that the signature take place in the presence of the circulator. The circulator should sign the affidavit at the end of said petition and have the affidavit notarized before submitting it to Highline Electric.
5. All petitions must be received at Highline Electric Association, 1300 S. Interocean, Holyoke, CO 80734 or P.O. Box 57, Holyoke, CO 80734 on or prior to January 26, 2024.

2024 RATE ADJUSTMENT

Highline Electric Association works diligently to keep rates as affordable as possible while maintaining the level of service our members expect. As a result of inflation, increasing demand, and the pressures of government-regulated shifts in energy supply, our power supplier has announced a 6% rate increase for Highline's wholesale power purchases. Our cost of power comprises roughly 73% of your monthly bill. In addition, the cost of material and fuel has continued to increase, making it more expensive to maintain our infrastructure.

Due to these increased expenses, Highline is expecting a retail rate increase in 2024. The association has engaged an outside rate consultant to perform a cost-of-service study, which will help guide the expected rate change. HEA's goal is to minimize the impact of the economic and industry changes to our members and continue providing safe, reliable electricity at the most economical cost. Watch for more information concerning this topic here in future issues of *Colorado Country Life* and on our website at www.hea.coop.




HEA Wishes Joni Kinney a Happy Retirement

Joni Kinney, (center) HEA's member services representative at the Sterling office, has retired. Joni started at HEA on June 5, 2012. We'll miss seeing her friendly face but wish her the best in retirement!

Highline Electric Association Employee Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following employee who observes an employment anniversary in December:

Matt Miller 10 years



Join HEA at the Parade of Lights

The Holyoke Parade is December 4 and the Sedgwick County Parade is December 7. There is no better way to kick off the holiday season and we hope to see you there!

Now accepting applications!

2024 Student Programs

Each year, Highline Electric Association sponsors all-expenses-paid trips for two students to attend the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and two students to attend Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs. To be a lucky winner of one of these two awesome experiences, please complete the application on our website.



All applications must be received by December 15, 2023. Visit www.hea.coop/youth to apply.

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 is now accepting applications for the 2023/2024 season. Please call 1-866-HEAT-HELP (1-866-432-8435) for more information.





“Winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year...”

SafeElectricity.org

STAY SAFE AS YOU GO OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS **THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

The winter holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual, shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings, or attending holiday events. All that time in the car can mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet, and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities.

Along with the risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle, and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another very significant danger to the mix: severe shock, burns, or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can save lives.

If you are in an accident involving a downed power line:

- Call 911 and tell the dispatcher a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved in a collision. Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the power.
- Roll down your window and alert others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.
- Never attempt to drive over a power line or through water, snow, or other debris that could be hiding one. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized, even if it is not sparking or buzzing.
- Do not exit the vehicle UNLESS it is on fire or you see smoke. The vehicle acts as an insulator that keeps you safe from stray electricity.
- If you MUST exit the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest, put your feet together, and make a clean jump from

the vehicle. Then hop with feet together as far as you can — at least 50 feet away. Once a power line is in contact with a car or truck, the ground, or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground and ripples out from there. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you.

- If a power line is inside the vehicle due to damage or an open window, stay in the vehicle. DO NOT touch or try to move the wire. DO NOT attempt to use other objects to move it.
- If your vehicle collides with a pad-mounted transformer that houses electrical equipment connected to underground power lines, the same safety precautions apply.

Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season! For more information about safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.



HOLIDAY HOURS

Highline Electric Association offices will be closed or have different hours throughout the holiday season.

CLOSED ALL DAY December 25 and 26

OFFICES CLOSE AT 3 P.M. ON December 29

CLOSED ALL DAY January 1, 2024

Visit www.heacoop anytime to find information about youth programs, rebates, community programs, and much more.