

K.C. ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2024

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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.

THINKING ABOUT SOLAR?

BY DAVID CHURCHWELL GENERAL MANAGER



DAVID CHURCHWELL

Recently I was doing some research on the internet and an ad popped up with K.C. Electric Association's name and an advertisement for lowering your power bill by installing solar panels. The add stated "Get solar for as low as \$0 down and \$79 per month and reduce or replace your electric bill." I felt that this advertisement was misleading, and I could envision one of our member-owners responding to this advertisement because they trust K.C. and believe that we are associated with this solar installation company.

Please know that K.C. Electric is not affiliated with these solar companies in any way and does not have any contractual agreements with solar installers. We do not oppose solar and have staff who can meet with you to discuss your interest and questions about solar installations. Below are a few frequently asked questions we receive regarding solar.

Q: I will never receive an electric bill from K.C. again, right?

A: There will always be a facility charge each month whether you have a residential or commercial account. So, even if you generate more electricity than you use in any given month, you will always receive a bill from K.C. for the facility charge.

Q: Will I be able to sell back electricity to K.C.?

A: K.C. banks any excess electricity generated during any given month against future months kilowatt-hour usage. Solar systems generate the most electricity during sunny days in the middle of the summer, so as production decreases as expected during the fall and winter, the banked kWh credit offsets usage in future months.

Q: Will I get a check from K.C. for power I sell back onto the grid?

A: Not necessarily. While we do have a few members who receive small checks during our annual "true up" of banked generated kilowatt-hours, most members generate less electricity than they consume on an annual basis, and do not typically receive an annual check from K.C. Those few members who do have banked kWh's when the annual "true up" is finalized are reimbursed for that balance at K.C.'s avoided cost of electricity which is currently around 4 cents per kWh.

Q: Where can I learn more about K.C.'s net metering policies?

A: For more information on our net metering policies please visit our website at kcelectric.coop, click on the Billing Info Tab, and then click on the Net Metering tab in the drop-down menu. There you can click on the various links to learn more about our net metering program.

Q: What should I know before I sign a contract?

- A: If you are purchasing a rooftop or ground-mounted solar system be sure to ask ...
- What is the total installation cost of the system?
 - What is the payback period? What are the assumptions underlying the estimate?
 - Will I need to finance the project?
 - Will I receive free electricity once the panels are paid for?
 - Does the company offer warranties on the panels and inverters?
 - What are the details of the service contract?
 - If you are leasing panels on a rooftop or ground-mounted system, be sure to ask...
 - What is the upfront cost of the system?
 - Are there other customers in the vicinity with comparable systems? How much

electricity are their systems producing?

- Can the lease be transferred if I sell the house?

Q: As a consumer, how can I protect myself and my investment?

A: Research. When you make the decision to invest in a solar system, you are making a significant financial investment. Be sure to do your research on the company and verify the expected output of the solar system by utilizing reputable online solar calculators.

- Is the company vertically integrated, meaning they sell, install, and maintain the panels and inverters. Or are you simply talking to a salesperson that will subcontract or sell the project to another company for installation, and maintenance will be your responsibility?
- Are the installers North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) and solar photovoltaic (PV) electric trained and certified?
- When was the company established and how much solar has it installed to date?
- Can the company provide a list of the projects and references for those projects?

As I stated before, K.C. does not install solar. But we want to be your trusted resource as you consider solar or other distributed generation systems. This short article is not a complete guide but is meant to highlight some issues for you to consider prior to deciding whether to install solar. Don't hesitate to contact our staff so all of your questions can be answered prior to signing a contract for a solar or other distributed generation system.



As farmers return to their fields this spring, Safe Electricity and K.C. Electric urge all farm workers to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Follow these safety tips:

- Determine power line locations before going out into the fields, and designate preplanned routes that avoid hazardous areas.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Be cognizant of tall antennas.
- Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines.
- Do not attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Coming too close to a power line while working can be just as dangerous as contacting one since electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects.
- Non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.
- When grounded wires that stabilize poles, known as guy wires, are broken, they become hazardous. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself.

REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY THIS PLANTING SEASON

- When it comes to dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric co-op.
- If your equipment contacts a power line, stay in the cab and call 911 or the co-op for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives.
- If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump — not step — with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop away from the area as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. If you are unable to hop, then shuffle with the insides of your feet touching. Do not return to the equipment until the power has been deenergized.

Farm managers and owners should make sure family members, staff, and seasonal workers are educated on these safety precautions. Dangerous areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled.

Start each day with a safety meeting to alert everyone to potential hazards and how to avoid them.

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

2024 K.C. ELECTRIC BOARD NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING NOMINATIONS ARE DUE SOON

Three directors will be elected to K.C. Electric's Board of Directors this year: One from Cheyenne County and two from Kit Carson County. Directors' terms expiring are Jerry Allen from Cheyenne County, Terry Tagtmeyer from Kit Carson County, and Jim Michal from Kit Carson County.

To be nominated, a person must be a member of K.C. Electric and a bona fide resident within the director's district for which he/she is nominated.

These individuals are your 2024 election committee:

Archie Cloud	Troy McCue	Tim Pautler	George Ehlers	Jeff Cure
P.O. Box 51	221 Pine.	20587 CR 33	PO Box 815	PO Box 370
Kit Carson, CO 80825	Arriba, CO 80804	Stratton, CO. 80836	Hugo, CO 80821	Burlington, Co 80807
719-349-0212	719-768-3493	Cell 719-349-1424	Cell 719-740-5002	719-346-7080

Official nominating petitions shall be issued by the Association not earlier than 90 days prior to the meeting at which the election is to be held. Petitions must be signed by at least 15 members, not more than one member in a joint membership, of the Association and returned to the Association for filing with the Board no less than 60 days prior to the election. Qualified candidates can pick up official nominating petitions at the Hugo or Stratton office. Official nominating petitions will be issued on March 8, 2024, and must arrive at the Hugo or Stratton office by April 7, 2024.

Circulators of the petition should attempt to verify accuracy 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 bottom of the petition and have the affidavit notarized before submitting the petition to K.C. Electric. Please print the name as it appears on the electric bill. If you are a spouse of a member and not listed on the electric bill, please indicate by printing your name as well as signing the petition. If your listing is a business and the name on the bill is a business, please print



the name of the business, then print your name and sign the petition.

Candidates should turn in a short biography with their signed petition. Deliver or mail to K.C. Electric Member Services Manager George Ehlers at the co-op's Hugo office no later than April 7, 2024.

Directors will be elected at the Annual Meeting, June 6, 2024, in Cheyenne Wells.

Safety Tip

Before beginning an outdoor project, always look up and look out for overhead power lines. Use extra caution when carrying a ladder or removing debris from gutters.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG


It's Easy! It's Free!

Planning a digging project in your yard or on your property? If you dig without knowing what is located below, you could damage an underground line.

Not only could you become seriously injured, but you will be responsible for the cost of repairs. To avoid hassles and fines, call 811, the Call Before You Dig number, at

least two business days prior to breaking ground. (811 locators do not mark privately owned underground lines or pipes, such as service to outbuildings, sprinkler systems or invisible fences.)

An uneventful digging project is the best kind to have.



THE PROS AND CONS OF A PERMANENT STANDBY GENERATOR

Many big businesses and massive buildings rely on standby power when the power goes out — for the safety of their employees and customers as well as to power essential items.

More and more home versions are being installed so that families can have backup power when they need it: to power appliances and essential medical equipment, or simply for convenience.

There is more than one type of permanent generator. One has a transfer switch that must be manually “thrown” before turning on the alternate source of power, which is wired into a house. This type of generator is permanent but not considered “standby” because of the manual switch, and it should not be located near a home. (Consult a professional electrician when installing or maintaining a permanent generator.)

Not throwing the switch can result in backfeed, which sends electricity back into power lines, and it can seriously injure or kill electric lineworkers or others.

Another type of fixed generator is permanently housed in a metal box and is usually located close to the house. It is the most expensive permanent generator — a **standby version** that is permanently and professionally installed to power most of the appliances in your home.

When needed, a standby generator automatically transfers the power source from

the electric grid to the generator. The cost of this type of permanent generator varies depending on how much backup power you want.

Besides the cost of the system, there are also installation costs to consider since it will need to be installed by licensed and bonded contractors. This is definitely not a DIY project. Fixr estimates the national average install cost between \$4,500 and \$9,000, not including the price of the unit.

When considering a standby generator, a representative from the supplier you select will assess your home’s energy needs and should ask you what you would like to power in the event of an outage. Other required steps include preparing a site near your current electrical meter and pouring a concrete pad.

The contractor will install a new subpanel and automatic transfer switch. Your generator supplier should also create a detailed plan of which appliances and electronics should not be supplied with power during an outage, since the generator’s power supply can fluctuate and possibly damage sensitive items.

To inquire about how permanent generators should be safely used and installed, contact K.C. Electric Association.

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



Claim Your Savings

Each month, K.C. Electric 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).

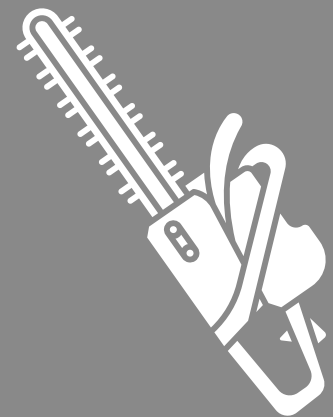
Sherry LeFlore, Cheyenne Wells — 4591xxxxxx

George Kemp, Cheyenne Wells — 11053xxxxxx

Sam Mersfelder, Flagler — 11616xxxxxx

Joel P. Maxcy, Kit Carson — 7138xxxxxx

In January, one member called to claim a bill credit: Bryan Gorton from Stratton.



Safety Tip

Do not trim trees/branches within 10 feet of a power line or pole. Only certified line clearance tree trimmers are authorized to trim near power lines.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH



Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening to ensure it’s clean. Use a vacuum to remove any lint that’s fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.

Source: energystar.gov