

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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www.dsoelectric.com



**DS&O ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**DSO**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# HEADLINER

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## Office Hours

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday  
Open over the lunch hour

## Payment Locations

**CENTRAL NATIONAL BANK IN  
WALMART SUPERCENTER**  
521 E. Chestnut St., Junction City, KS 66441  
**FARMERS STATE BANK**  
447 Harrison, Lindsborg, KS 67456

## Outage Information

**IN CASE OF AN OUTAGE, CALL  
800-376-3533.** After-hours calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to standby personnel.

## Find Out More

-  facebook.com/DS&OElectricCooperative  
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## In the Driver's Seat

Life can be hectic, but it doesn't all have to be complicated. Paying your electric bill shouldn't be a complex task and with SmartHub it won't be.

You may have heard about SmartHub, but what can it do for you? SmartHub has several features that make managing your electric account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or the app on your smartphone or tablet, you'll be able to pay your bill, view your usage, contact customer service and get the latest news.

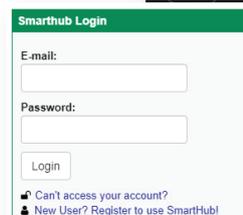
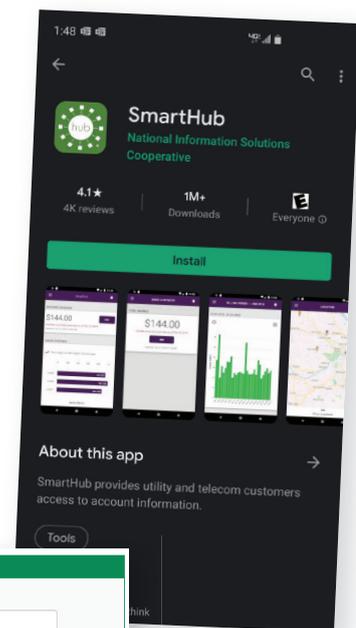
As soon as you log in, you can view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks. You'll be able to see your current bill, along with bills from the previous month or even the previous summer, if you want to compare costs. Not only will you see your billing history, but you'll be able to view your actual use. You can also review your electricity use over time, which will allow you to take steps to lower your bill.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment, you can securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks.

You'll also be able to see important notices with SmartHub. SmartHub helps you select how you want to be notified about your bill, including email and text messaging, set usage thresholds so that you'll know when you're using more energy than you'd like, and help you keep your electricity bill as low as possible. Access to this detailed usage information can provide insight and help you better understand your electric bill, allowing you to put yourself in the driver's seat.

Access SmartHub by visiting dsoelectric.com or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store or Google Play Marketplace.

Take control of your account today.



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## What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?

### Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



### Refrigerator

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



### Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.



## ENERGY STAR Appliances: Do They Really Save You Money?

If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might wonder if buying an ENERGY STAR®-certified version will make a difference in your energy bills.

The short answer is yes, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart.

In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the purchase price and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances displaying the ENERGY STAR logo use 10-15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov. For example, ENERGY STAR clothes washers use about 40% less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

And the longer answer is yes, if you consider the appliance's lifespan. ENERGY STAR appliances and other products used throughout your home can save you a collective \$750 over their lifespan, according to Energy.gov. Besides appliances, there are other ENERGY STAR -certified products, such as lighting and electronics.

While selecting energy-saving designated appliances could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices and don't assume they cost substantially more than less

efficient models.

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck might be your refrigerator, especially if it is 15 years old or older. By replacing your old fridge with a new ENERGY STAR-certified model, you can save more than \$200 over a 12-year lifespan.

**TIP:** EnergyStar.gov offers a "Flip Your Fridge" calculator to estimate savings depending on the size and age of your largest kitchen appliance.

According to EnergyStar.gov, if every appliance purchased in the United States this year earned the ENERGY STAR designation, Americans would:

- ▶ Prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from 225,000 cars.
- ▶ Save more than 1.3 billion kWh/year of electricity.
- ▶ Save \$425 million in annual energy costs.
- ▶ Save more than 28 billion gallons of water per year (includes ENERGY STAR-certified clothes washers, dishwashers, and refrigerators). Dollars savings reflect savings generated from the reduction of energy and water usage.

Bottom line? The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 a year on home utility bills. Switching to ENERGY STAR products can help lower these costs over time.

## Help Keep Our Crews Safe

Orange road signs are not just for highway construction zones; they also apply to utility work zones. Slowing down before entering work zones helps save lives, including the lives of our crew members who must often work roadside to maintain or restore power.

Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground, they can also put a lineworker, who is working high up in a bucket, in serious danger. The force created by fast moving vehicles can cause work truck buckets to move or sway into high-voltage lines. Please, take extra care in work zones. Our crews and their families thank you.





## Double Check Your Solar Checklist

Considering purchasing a photovoltaic (PV)/solar power system to help supply your home's energy needs?

Just as you would for any major home improvement project, doing your own research and finding the right contractor is key to a successful outcome. Will the end product be of high quality and will it perform as it should? What, exactly, is the company promising and has it proven to be true with past clients?

Beyond those obvious questions, here are some other aspects to consider before signing on the dotted line:

- ▶ Know all the costs, not just those for equipment and installation. There are also "soft costs," which can set you back for more than the system itself according to Energy.gov. Those soft costs include permitting, financing, and "pass along" costs for marketing, advertising and research.
- ▶ What are the pros and cons of solar versus electric energy?
- ▶ Thoroughly research the solar installation company you are considering. Is it a local company? Is it backed by the Better Business Bureau? How long has it been in business? Is it contracted to do business in Kansas?
- ▶ Are the people installing the system employees or subcontractors? Have they been properly trained and are they certified in solar installation?
- ▶ Does the company hold at least a \$1 million general insurance policy for possible workers' compensation and liability claims, among other types?
- ▶ Is the company skilled at and does it have a solid track record of advising the appropriate/most advantageous type and size of system needed?
- ▶ If there are incentives, who completes the paperwork for the potential tax credits, rebates and other incentives? What are the tax credit requirements?
- ▶ How much energy will the system provide and is it enough? Too much?
- ▶ Is there a master electrician on-site?
- ▶ How will the installer consult staff from my electric cooperative? Does the installer have experience coordinating/integrating solar systems with the electric grid?
- ▶ What does the bid include, exactly? Is it just for equipment? Does it include labor and installation? What about other costs?
- ▶ Does the bid and contract include breakdown costs for every component/part, as well as labor and other fees, and projected start and end dates?
- ▶ What are the complete short- and long-term costs and what will it save in the long run?
- ▶ What do objective reviewers say about their experience with the company?
- ▶ What happens to my power supply when it's cloudy?
- ▶ Do savings vary depending on geographic location?
- ▶ Does the company promise savings that sound too good to be true?
- ▶ Who maintains the equipment and how much does that cost?
- ▶ What are the safety issues surrounding solar? How is the power safely disconnected if needed?
- ▶ Should I buy or lease the system and what is the difference?
- ▶ What happens if I move?
- ▶ Does your electric utility require any additional insurance for operating a solar array?
- ▶ What happens with the renewable energy credits produced from your solar array?

These are only some of the details to consider. Be sure to do your homework before agreeing to any major home project, including a solar/PV system installation.

Please contact us prior to signing up for solar installation so we can coordinate energy grid hookup and answer any questions you may have.

## Before You Say Yes to Solar

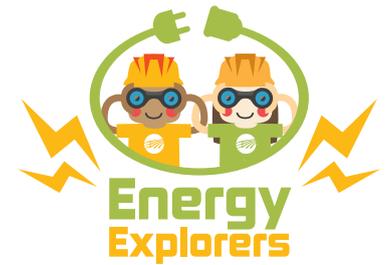
If you are considering a photovoltaic "solar system" for your home, there is more to consider than promised monthly savings. Please contact us with questions about solar versus traditional electric energy transmission and delivery, as well as connection to the power grid. Here are some of the many aspects to consider:



- ▶ **KNOW ALL THE COSTS** beyond equipment and installation including "soft costs" that can cost more than the system, according to Energy.gov. Soft costs include permit acquisition, financing charges and "pass-along" marketing and research costs.
- ▶ **INVESTIGATE THE COMPANY** Is it backed by the Better Business Bureau? Is it contracted to do business in Kansas?
- ▶ **COLLECT OBJECTIVE OPINIONS** about the pros and cons of solar.
- ▶ **CLOUDY DAYS?** Ask how they impact energy supply?
- ▶ **ARE INSTALLERS SPECIALLY TRAINED AND CERTIFIED** to install solar?
- ▶ **IS THE WORK SUPERVISED** by a master electrician?
- ▶ **WHO MAINTAINS THE EQUIPMENT** and how much does that cost?
- ▶ **DOES THE COMPANY CARRY MAJOR INSURANCE** for individuals working on my property?
- ▶ **HOW DOES THE SYSTEM INTERFACE** with my electric utility?
- ▶ **SHOULD I BUY OR LEASE** the system and what happens if I move?
- ▶ **WHAT ARE THE SAFETY ISSUES** surrounding solar?
- ▶ **HOW IS THE POWER SAFELY DISCONNECTED** if needed?
- ▶ **DOES MY UTILITY REQUIRE** me to carry special insurance?

# POWER RESTORATION FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about the steps of power restoration. Use the word bank if you need help, and check your work in the answer key.

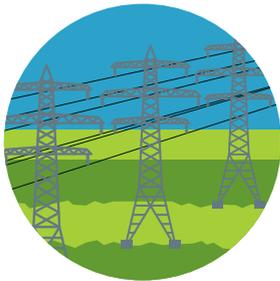


## WORD BANK:

distribution  
pads

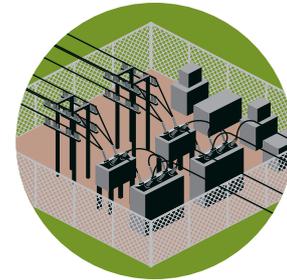
transformer  
substations

transmission



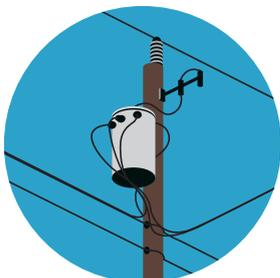
1. High-voltage \_\_\_\_\_ lines are the large towers and cables that supply power to the greatest number of consumer-members. They rarely fail, but if they do, they have to be repaired first.

2. Next, crews inspect distribution \_\_\_\_\_ for damage. They determine if the problem stems from the lines feeding into the equipment itself, or if the problem is further down the line.



3. If the problem still can't be pinpointed, \_\_\_\_\_ power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.

4. If the power outage persists, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on poles or placed on \_\_\_\_\_ for underground electric service.



5. If your home remains without power, the service line between the \_\_\_\_\_ and your home may need repairs.

Answer Key: 1. transmission 2. substations 3. distribution 4. pads 5. transformer