



**DSO ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**DSO**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**HEADLINER**

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Operations Manager

**Derrick Rutherford**  
Communications Manager

## 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/DSOElectricCooperative

 @DSOElectricCoop

## ON THE LINE

# Remember the Underground Utilities

BY MIKE J. OLBERDING, OPERATIONS MANAGER

The weather is starting to cool off, and it is getting to be the time of the year when people start fall projects like remodeling houses, building sheds, outbuildings and fences, planting trees, and other outdoor work. If you are building or renovating, make sure you have all the permits and meet all zoning requirements. But laying out the plan and making sure it works with all the utilities is also an important step that you may not have considered.

Kansas 811 (kansasoneline.com) is a free service that will locate most buried utilities. Make sure you call Kansas 811 before you start a project. Put out flags or paint to show where the digging will take place, so the locators understand where they need to mark. This will help ensure that they get everything located in the digging area, which will help keep everyone safe. In most cases where there is a line or pipe at issue, the utility company will want to move the line or

pipe. If not, you may have to relocate your project.

Making sure all utilities are located is your responsibility. Waiting until you have started a project to figure out that something needs to be moved can be both dangerous and costly. If you are tempted to forgo calling 811, understand that, while electric lines need to be 3-feet deep, installers do not always bury them the correct depth and landscaping and natural erosion can also change the depth of buried utilities. This could be very dangerous if you are digging or trenching and do not realize what is below.

Finally, it is a good idea to map out your underground utilities in case there is an emergency. If you are purchasing a home, ask if the previous owner or builder has a map of underground utilities.

A little planning will go a long way in keeping you, and those working on your property, safe.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 21% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY-STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Sources: energystar.gov and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory



## How Smart is a SMART THERMOSTAT?



**MYTH** My thermostat automatically saves me money.

**FACT** That depends on how it's programmed and your preferences. It still uses the same amount of energy to reach and maintain temperatures.



**MYTH** A smart thermostat is smart straight out of the box.

**FACT** The thermostat needs a little time to learn your heating and cooling preferences.



**MYTH** My thermostat is only as smart as I am.

**FACT** Sort of. Most models are independent thinkers and adjust the temperature if no one's home.



**MYTH** It's creepy, my smart thermostat seems to know when I'm home.

**FACT** It's smart for a reason! Geotechnology syncs your thermostat with your arrival. Some models use geofencing technology that tracks your smart phone location and kicks on when you're nearby.



**MYTH** My smart thermostat makes me smarter.

**FACT** We'll give you this one! It can help you save money and make your home more efficient.

## DSO County Tax Distribution

DSO Electric paid \$918,564.46 in property taxes in 2020. This was an increase of \$55,324.98 when compared to taxes paid last year. At right, you can see a comparison of taxes paid to each county.

Although DSO signs the checks that pay for the property taxes, we realize that you, our members, actually pay the bill. A fair portion of your check goes to pay property taxes and helps the communities in our area.

### DSO Property Tax Comparison

County	2020	2019	% Change
Dickinson	\$462,650.30	\$428,533.76	7.96%
Saline	\$123,029.84	\$115,277.62	6.72%
Ottawa	\$143,846.58	\$135,853.38	5.88%
Geary	\$64,554.60	\$63,804.64	1.18%
Cloud	\$23,617.90	\$23,278.02	1.46%
Marion	\$8,756.02	\$8,388.56	4.38%
McPherson	\$89,864.04	\$85,878.32	4.64%
Morris	\$1,511.38	\$1,449.80	4.25%
Ellsworth	\$733.80	\$775.38	-5.36%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$918,564.46</b>	<b>\$863,239.48</b>	<b>6.02%</b>

## Cold Weather Rule – Effective Nov. 1-March 31

The provisions of the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) allow for special payment, disconnections and service limitation procedures for any residential member with unpaid arrearages to retain or restore electric service through the cold weather period, which extends from Nov. 1 through March 31.

**DSO shall not disconnect a member's service when the local National Weather Service office forecasts the temperature to drop below 35 degrees within the next 24-hour period unless:**

- ▶ It is at the member's request; or
- ▶ The service is abandoned; or
- ▶ A dangerous condition exists on the member's premises; or
- ▶ The member violates any DSO rule that adversely affects the safety of the member or other persons, or the physical integrity of DSO's delivery system;
- ▶ The member causes or permits unauthorized interference with, or diversion or use of (meter bypass), electric service situated or delivered on or about the member's premises.

**To keep from getting disconnected when the temperature is 35 degrees or above, or to get reconnected regardless of temperature, a member must comply with the provisions of the "Good Faith Test." To meet the Good Faith Test and qualify for the benefits of the CWR, the member shall:**

- ▶ Inform DSO of the member's inability to pay the bill in full;
- ▶ Give sufficient information to allow DSO to make a payment agreement;
- ▶ Make an initial payment acceptable to DSO; and
- ▶ Apply for federal, state, local or other funds for which the member is eligible; and
- ▶ Enter a Level Payment Plan (rolling average favored) for current and future consumption acceptable to DSO; and
- ▶ Not illegally divert (bypass meter) electric service; and
- ▶ Not default on a payment plan.

**DSO shall provide the following CWR notices:**

- ▶ Mail a written notice of the CWR or publish a notice in the *Kansas Country Living* once a year at least 30 days prior to the CWR period to each residential member who is currently receiving service.
- ▶ Send on written notice mailed first class at least ten days prior to termination of service. A member may not be disconnected until a 24-hour forecast above the activating temperature is predicted by the National Weather Service.

DSO may notify, as a courtesy, members by telephone at least 24-hours before they are to be disconnected. Notification by telephone may be by electronic notification equipment to the member's telephone number on file and may include delivery to automated answering equipment, electron mail or answering services. The CWR does not apply to prepaid accounts. If the account balance is \$0 or below during inclement weather, then it shall not postpone disconnection of a prepaid account.



## Know What to Do Around a Downed Power Line

Old Man Winter can create some pretty severe storms, which can interfere with power distribution or even bring down lines.

What is the most important thing to remember about a downed power line?

**DO NOT GO NEAR IT.** For any reason.

After a storm has caused damage in or alongside a roadway, be alert and slow down. Do not attempt to drive over downed lines. Do not try to drive through water or over snow or debris that may be covering downed lines. Driving over a line can pull more lines or related equipment down.

If you encounter a downed line, pull over and report the location to 911.

Here is some additional information about downed lines, which can occur after a severe storm or an accident involving a power pole.

**Q: CAN I TELL IF A DOWNED LINE IS ENERGIZED BY LOOKING?**

A: No, there is no way to tell. Always assume a downed line (or any line) is live, even if it is not buzzing or sparking.

**Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM IN AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING A POWER LINE OR OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT?**

A: **DO NOT** get out of your car or truck. It is always safer to remain inside a vehicle, which acts as an insulator and keeps you out of the path of stray electricity. Call 911, and tell the dispatcher a downed line or other electrical equipment is involved. Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the electricity.

**Q: IS THERE ANY REASON I SHOULD GET OUT OF THE VEHICLE?**

A: Yes, but only when your vehicle is on fire or if you see smoke. If that is the case, make a clean jump from the vehicle without touching it (cross your arms closely to your chest), and then hop with feet together as far as you can — preferably 50 or more feet away.

**Q: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ELECTRICAL CURRENT WHEN A LINE IS DOWN?**

A: Once a power line is in contact with a vehicle, the ground or other objects, it energizes the area. The

electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. 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. This is why you should hop or shuffle once you make a clean jump from the vehicle. Always keep your feet together — think of hopping like a bunny or shuffling like a penguin.

**Q: WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?**

A: Put your window down and yell to 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.

**Q: WHAT IF I CAN'T TELL WHAT TYPE OF LINE IS DOWN?**

A: Either way still stay in your vehicle and wait for the utility personnel to arrive.

**Q: ARE THERE ANY OTHER INSTANCES WHEN THESE SAME SAFETY TIPS APPLY?**

A: Yes, the same rules apply to any type of equipment (e.g., farming and construction equipment) that comes in contact with overhead lines or electrical cabinets or equipment.

**Q: SO JUST TO REVIEW, WHY AM I SAFE IN MY VEHICLE?**

A: Because you are not a path for electricity while in a vehicle.

**Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE WINDSHIELD IS BROKEN AND THE DOWNED WIRE IS IN MY CAR OR TRUCK?**

A: Stay in the vehicle and do not touch or try to move the wire or attempt to use other objects to move the wire.

**Q: WHAT IF I HIT A PAD-MOUNTED TRANSFORMER (METAL CABINET OR GREEN BOX) IN A YARD?**

A: Pad-mounted transformers house electrical equipment connected to underground power lines. The same safety precautions apply to all to these cabinets and the voltage that could stray when damaged.

## Downed & Dangerous

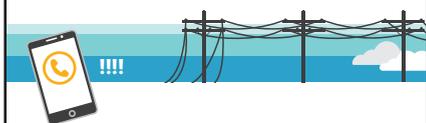
If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



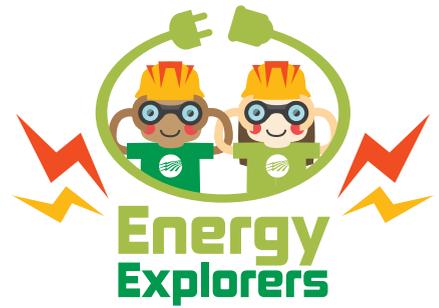
Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is de-energized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org

# CO-OP MONTH FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?

Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about a few ways co-ops are unique! Use the word bank if you need help.



1. Co-ops and their members work together toward a common \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Co-ops are \_\_\_\_\_ organizations, so they understand the communities they serve.
3. All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Concern for \_\_\_\_\_ is the seventh cooperative principle.
5. Co-ops don't have customers; we have \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Co-ops are \_\_\_\_\_ by the members they serve.

## WORD BANK

LED  
LOCAL

GOAL  
PRINCIPLES

MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY

Answer Key: 1) goal 2) local 3) principles 4) community 5) members 6) led