

CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Enlightener

CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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LIGHTBULB WINNERS

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- ▶ Lance Davis
- ▶ Juan Dominguez
- ▶ Sharon Farris
- ▶ Mark Gerrald
- ▶ Thomas Gibson
- ▶ Ray Gokey

Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!

NONDISCRIMINATION

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Lineworkers Are Ready When It Matters Most

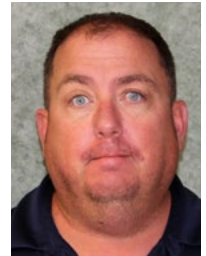
At CMS Electric Cooperative, we have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. In April, we take time to pause and recognize the brave men and women who make that possible every single day — our lineworkers.

When storms impact our communities and outages occur, many people experience the inconvenience, but our lineworkers see a call to action. Our crews are always ready when it matters most — leaving family dinners, working through the night, and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they aren't just restoring power to a system — they're restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand that electricity is more than a convenience; it's essential to daily life and to local businesses, schools, farms and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to lineworkers.

Electric cooperatives like CMS Electric Cooperative were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours behind the

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Mike Bushnell
Coldwater
District Manager

80TH ANNUAL MEETING MAY 7 | PROTECTION, KANSAS

The 2026 CMS Annual Meeting of the Members will be on **THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026**, at South Central Middle School Gym in Protection. There will be a delicious meal catered by John Ross Catering for all cooperative members and their immediate families, starting at 5:30 p.m. The business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Business will include reports on cooperative activities and the election of trustees. Valuable prizes and many energy credit certificates will be given away at the conclusion of the meeting. You must be present at the drawings to win.

PLEASE DON'T MISS YOUR ANNUAL MEETING. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT!



GROW YOUR SAVINGS

Landscaping That Cuts Energy Costs

When most people think about saving energy, they picture insulation upgrades, efficient windows and appliance swaps. But your yard can play a major role, too. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, a well-planned landscape can reduce air-conditioning costs by up to 25% and pay for itself in less than eight years.

Because landscaping results vary by region, keep in mind that the U.S. has plant hardiness climate zones ranging from zone 1 (coldest) to zone 13 (warmest). In Kansas alone, you will find four different plant hardiness zones. Find your zone at www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov and plant strategically for your zone.

**CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREES:
DECIDUOUS OR EVERGREEN**

- ▶ Deciduous trees (those that lose their leaves in the winter) block sunlight in the summer and allow light in during the colder months, helping to regulate indoor temperatures year-round.
- ▶ Evergreen trees provide consistent shade and can serve as windbreaks, which is especially helpful in cool climates.

TIP: In hot climates, choose native or drought-tolerant species. They require less water and are typically more resilient. Avoid native eastern red cedars, as they aggressively spread into grasslands, where they serve as fire fuel.

PLACEMENT MATTERS

- ▶ **WEST AND NORTHWEST SIDES:** Plant trees to block strong mid- to late-afternoon sun.

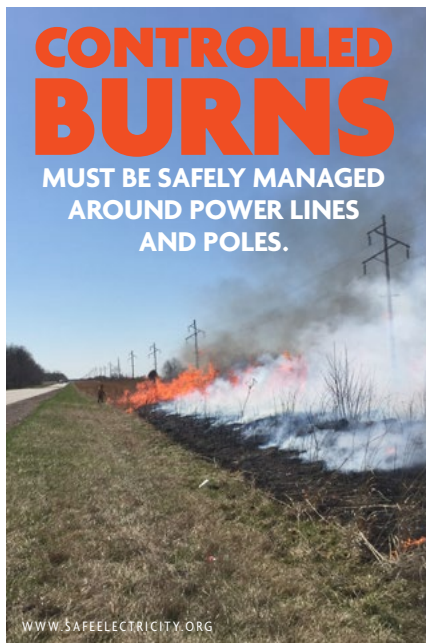
- ▶ **EAST AND WEST WINDOWS:** Use deciduous trees to block summer sun but still allow winter light.
 - ▶ **SOUTH SIDE:** Tall trees planted at a distance equal to two to five times their mature height can shade your home without blocking winter sun.
 - ▶ **WEST SIDE:** Shorter trees and shrubs help shield against intense, low-angle afternoon sun.
 - ▶ **PATIOS AND DRIVEWAYS:** Shade these areas to reduce reflected heat.
 - ▶ **HOME PERIMETER:** Bushes can absorb sunlight and reduce heat transfer, but avoid dense plantings in humid climates, where airflow is important to prevent excess moisture.
- TIP:** Be mindful near solar panels. Avoid planting tall trees on the south side of panels to prevent shade during peak sun hours.

PLAN FOR A TREE'S MATURE HEIGHT

- ▶ Avoid planting trees that will grow taller than 15 feet near power lines.
- ▶ For taller species, plant at least 20 feet away — 45 feet is even better — to prevent safety hazards and avoid future pruning.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

- ▶ Before you plant anything, call 811 to check for underground utilities. This free service marks public lines, like electricity, water and gas, so you avoid costly and dangerous mistakes. Call several business days before you plan to dig.



SAFETY TIP

Power poles aren't bulletin boards. Nails, staples, signs and decorations can injure lineworkers or damage their protective gear and equipment when they climb poles to keep the power on. Keep poles clear to help protect the people who power our community.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



Lineworkers Are Ready When It Matters Most

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scenes. At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events, CMS Electric Cooperative crews stand ready to assist neighboring co-ops — sometimes close to home, and sometimes across state lines — to help restore power. This spirit of mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand that any time the lights go out can be frustrating, bringing everyday life to a halt. We are incredibly grateful to our members for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical, and at times, dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take

pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 13, 2026, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and dedication, which are the backbone of our cooperative.

CMS Electric Cooperative, Inc., would like to thank our past, present and future lineworkers for their service to our communities. Below are those currently on our staff:

DYLAN BOLTON	BLAISE SAUCEDO
JOE CEBALLOS	GABE SHIREMAN
JUSTIN ELLIS	KAIDIN UPSON
MIKEY GILLEN	JARED WEBER
CLINT MONROE	KEVIN WIENS
LED BY: ANDY ALEXANDER and	
MIKE BUSHNELL	



READY WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY IS APRIL 13, 2026

Spring Into Energy Savings

Spring is a season of renewal — and a great time to refresh your energy habits, too! As temperatures begin to warm and daily routines shift, a few small changes around your home can add up to meaningful energy savings.

CMS Electric Cooperative is committed to helping our members use energy wisely while keeping homes comfortable year-round.

Spring is the perfect time to schedule maintenance for your heating and cooling system. Spring and fall checkups conducted by a licensed professional can help ensure your system is running efficiently, safely and reliably before the peak seasons begin. A well-maintained unit uses less energy, lasts longer and helps prevent costly breakdowns when you need it most.

If you're looking for a simple place to start saving, look no further than ceiling fans. Fans don't actually cool or heat the air, but they help you feel more comfortable by moving it. During warmer months, make sure your ceiling fan blades are set to rotate counterclockwise. This creates a downward breeze that makes you feel cooler, allowing you to raise your thermostat a few degrees without sacrificing comfort. In cooler months, reverse the direction of fan blades clockwise to help push warm air down from the ceiling, improving efficiency when your heating system is running.

Speaking of thermostats, adjusting the temperature just a few degrees can make a noticeable difference on your energy bill. As spring arrives, try setting your thermostat slightly higher

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when cooling or slightly lower when heating. Even a two- or three-degree adjustment can reduce energy use while still keeping your home comfortable — especially when combined with ceiling fans or open windows on mild, pleasant days.

Hot water use is another area where simple habits matter. Taking shorter showers can help reduce the amount of energy used to heat water, which makes up a significant portion of most energy bills. Cutting just a few minutes off each shower not only saves energy but also conserves water.

Finally, the time of day you use energy can also play a part in savings. When you run major appliances during off-peak hours (when energy demand is lower), you can take advantage of non-peak rates and help reduce pressure on the electric grid — that's a win-win!

CMS Electric Cooperative is here to help every season, every step of the way. We offer energy-saving programs and resources designed to help you lower energy use for your home or business and manage costs. If you have questions or want to learn more about energy efficiency offerings and programs, visit www.cmselectric.com/rebate-and-surge-suppression-programs.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE:

- ▶ Stay at least 50 feet away.
- ▶ Do not touch the line or anything — or anyone — it's touching.
- ▶ Warn others to stay far back.
- ▶ Call 911 and state it's an electrical emergency.
- ▶ Do not touch or step in water near a downed line. Water conducts electricity and creates a dangerous mix.

IF YOU'RE INSIDE YOUR VEHICLE:

- ▶ Stay inside and call 911.
- ▶ Wait for utility or emergency crews to tell you it's safe to exit.
- ▶ Only leave the vehicle if there is immediate danger, like a fire.

IF YOU MUST EXIT DUE TO FIRE OR DANGER:

- ▶ Open a door that's not touching the ground, if possible.
- ▶ Cross your arms over your chest. Jump clear without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time.
- ▶ Land with feet together. Shuffle or hop away without separating them. Get as far away as you can.
- ▶ Avoid power lines that are on the ground or sagging overhead.
- ▶ Do not go back to the vehicle until it's confirmed safe.

STAY AT LEAST 50 FEET AWAY.

STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED LINES
Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous, even if it's not sparking or making noise.
KNOW WHAT TO DO TO SAVE LIVES.

NEVER DRIVE OVER A DOWNED POWER LINE.

SOURCE
WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG