

## CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# The Enlightener

### CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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#### LIGHTBULB WINNERS

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- ▶ Ana Moore
- ▶ Hiedi Napierala
- ▶ Mark Reed
- ▶ Delores Rhine
- ▶ Miriam Romo
- ▶ Chayse Ross

Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!

#### NONDISCRIMINATION

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Are You a Co-op Voter?

CMS has again joined America's electric cooperatives to help get out the vote into our community by being a part of the Co-ops Vote program. This collaborative effort provides us the opportunity to educate lawmakers, build awareness about our issues and concerns, and advocate for policies that are important to our co-op and our community.

Federal, state and local elections offer opportunities to vote for leaders who support energy policies that promote safe, reliable and affordable energy. In particular, they allow us to elect public officials who understand and appreciate America's electric cooperatives and will serve as our champion during policy discussions.

Now is the perfect time to confirm that you are registered to vote and encourage new voters to get registered. For voter resources and to learn the five simple steps to being a co-op

voter, visit the Co-ops Vote website at [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop).

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan program developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. Co-op voters across 48 states work together to ensure that electric co-ops have a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact.

Co-ops are a trusted voice in Washington, D.C. The more our community members turn out to vote, the greater the opportunity we have to elect leaders who understand co-ops and the issues we face.

The co-op voice is powerful, and it starts with you!



# LOOK UP

Before You Climb

Using a ladder near overhead power lines could cause electrocution.

1. Keep yourself and equipment 10 feet from overhead power lines.
  - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
  - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
2. Use a ladder during ideal weather conditions.
  - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
  - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
3. Do not trim trees/branches that are near power lines.
  - ▶ It is dangerous to trim near overhead power lines.
  - ▶ By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.
4. Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.
  - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
  - ▶ Always follow the 10-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.



Follow manufacturer's safety recommendations when using a ladder. Look up before you climb.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

## Cybersecurity Tips for a Safer Digital World

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

CMS Electric is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too.

When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

- ▶ **LEARN HOW TO SPOT AND REPORT PHISHING ATTEMPTS.** Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as soon as possible

— and don't forget to block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.)

- ▶ **CREATE STRONG, UNIQUE PASSWORDS.** When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.
  - ▶ **ENABLE MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION WHEN AVAILABLE.** Multi-factor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.
  - ▶ **UPDATE SOFTWARE REGULARLY.** Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.
- Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.

### October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Let's work together to build a safer digital world. Whether at home, work or school, we can increase our online safety with the following tips:

- 🔒 Recognize and report phishing attempts.
- 🔒 Use strong, unique passwords.
- 🔒 Enable multi-factor authentication.
- 🔒 Update software regularly.



# National First Responders Day



National First Responders Day, observed annually on Oct. 28, is an excellent time to recognize and honor the vital role of first responders. They make it their business to take action when disaster strikes.

First responders play a crucial role in protecting public safety and responding to emergencies. These dedicated professionals include firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. They face numerous challenges and make significant sacrifices to safeguard our communities.

It's important to note that utility workers, including those in the electricity sector, are also considered first responders. In 2003, President George W. Bush officially recognized public works professionals as first responders, highlighting the critical role utility workers play in emergency response and recovery efforts.

## UTILITIES AND FIRST RESPONDERS: AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP

Utility companies and traditional first responders often work hand in hand during emergencies. When natural disasters strike or accidents occur, util-

**To all who selflessly serve as first responders to keep us safe — we share gratitude on National First Responders Day and every day of the year.**

ity workers are frequently among the first on the scene, working alongside firefighters, police and medical personnel to ensure public safety and restore essential services.

When traffic accidents, high winds, ice storms and other events involve downed power lines or power outages, they can cause both visible and hidden hazards that can put everyone at risk. It's important for utility workers and other first responders to work together to minimize risk.

First responders have a critical role in keeping communities safe. National First Responders Day serves as a reminder of the importance of collaboration, preparedness and mutual support in times of crisis.

To all who selflessly serve as first responders to keep us safe — we share gratitude on National First Responders Day and every day of the year.

**KEEP YOUR  
INFORMATION  
UP TO DATE**

Please keep your contact information including phone number, email address and mailing address up to date.

Keeping your information up to date helps us keep you in the know about the business and operations of your electric cooperative.

Contact our offices at 800-794-2353 if you need to update the contact information on your account.

We appreciate your help in gathering this information.

## Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:

- ▶ Discard decorations with cracked or frayed cords or damaged plugs.
- ▶ Do not put decorations on power poles, pad-mounted transformers or other electrical equipment.
- ▶ Use decorations endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- ▶ If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are rated for outdoor use.
- ▶ Secure all cords so they do not become tripping hazards.
- ▶ Plug all cords into circuits protected by GFCIs to prevent electrical shock.
- ▶ Do not use nails or tacks to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- ▶ Keep decorations away from flammable items like bales of hay or cornstalks.

**HAVE A SAFE AND FESTIVE HALLOWEEN  
COMPLETE WITH SAFE TRICKS AND TASTY TREATS.**

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG



## 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Did you know electric co-ops are guided by a set of Seven Cooperative Principles? These principles ensure co-ops like ours remain focused on member needs, community impact and co-op values.

Complete the crossword below to learn more about the cooperative principles. Use the word bank to check your work.



### ACROSS

- 2. **COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops \_\_\_\_\_ and learn from other co-ops.
- 5. **AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are \_\_\_\_\_ and can operate on their own.
- 6. **MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members \_\_\_\_\_ money to ensure the co-op runs smoothly.
- 7. **OPEN & VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Co-op membership is open to \_\_\_\_\_ .

### DOWN

- 1. **CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** Co-ops give back to their local \_\_\_\_\_ to help them thrive and grow.
- 3. **EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION:** Co-ops focus on \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure employees and members have the info they need.
- 4. **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Members get to make \_\_\_\_\_ about the co-op.

2 ACROSS: SHARE; 5 ACROSS: INDEPENDENT; 6 ACROSS: CONTRIBUTE; 7 ACROSS: EVERYONE; 1 DOWN: EDUCATION; 4 DOWN: DECISIONS