

## TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



### Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Ron Holsteen General Manager

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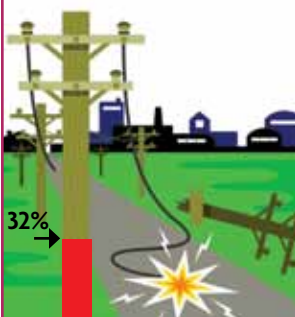
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Trustee

#### Office Hours

**Monday-Friday**  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### FEMA Rebuild Update

As of June 15, we have completed 32% of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rebuild work.



#### FROM THE MANAGER

## We Need Your Help

With all of today's technologies, computers, printers, air conditioners, TVs, VCRs, and microwaves, consumers are more "plugged in" than ever before. Turn on the lights and TV, boot up the computer, and head to the kitchen to start dinner. Arriving home after a full day at work, most of us walk through a familiar routine.

When anything that uses electricity is switched on—be it a light bulb, a toaster, or a clothes dryer—a power plant instantaneously steps up to fill the need, moving electricity along a state-of-the-art network in the blink of an eye.

We hardly take a step that does not involve the reliable flow of electricity. Every light switch or appliance

we turn on sends the electric meter outside spinning a little faster and the monthly bill a little higher. During the hot summer days, all of our generation resources are needed to meet that demand, further increasing the costs of producing and transmitting the electricity.

We watch with concern and ask, "Is there anything one person can do to make a difference?" The answer is an emphatic, "yes!"

It starts with learning all we can about load management, energy conservation and efficiency. While they are not the same thing, they are close relatives.

Load management occurs during the peak usage hours of 4 p.m.



Ron Holsteen

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### Energy Conservation Tips

Below are some tips you can follow to easily and comfortably lighten the power load in your home—and cut energy bills too:

- ▶ **Shift energy-intensive tasks**, laundry and dishwashing, to off-peak energy demand hours nights and weekends, and remember to do full loads.
- ▶ **Listen to your mother.** ("What do you think—we own the electric company?") Turn off everything not in use such as lights, TVs, printers and computers and unplug cell phone and battery chargers.
- ▶ **Reduce utility bills by as much as 30 percent.** Look for the Energy Star label, the symbol for energy efficiency,

when shopping for major appliances, lighting, windows, and home electronics. Find retailers near you at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

- ▶ **Install CFLs.** Replacing four 75-watt incandescent bulbs with 23-watt fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) that use about two-thirds less energy and last up to 10 times longer saves \$190 over the life of the bulbs.
- ▶ **Switch to cold water washing of laundry** in top-loading washing machines to save energy and up to \$63 a year—detergents formulated for cold water get clothes just as clean.

For more energy-efficient tips and information on how to save money around the home, visit the Alliance to Save Energy at [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org).

## NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

## Blinking Lights



William Worthy

**If you run across a galvanized guy wire that shines like the front bumper on a '57 Chevy, let us know**

12:00, 12:00, 12:00, 12:00, “Call the electric cooperative., the electricity must have blinked.”

We know this is frustrating for you and your family, and it is not something we take lightly at your electric cooperative. Here at Twin Valley, we investigate every report of blinking lights until we find and repair the source of the problem.

At Twin Valley, we have 3,500 meters spread out over nearly 1,000 miles of line; this averages just about 3.5 meters per mile. Delivery of your co-op’s power is supported by over 18,000 structures that are susceptible to any and all things that can be detrimental to the system.

Trees (see last month’s *Notes*) are usually the culprit, but wind, lightning, birds, squirrels, possums, cats, snakes and people are also something we battle nonstop. Plus, a 2,000 lb Black Angus bull trying to relieve a summertime itch by rubbing on a guy wire is also a challenge that we have had to face.

Your cooperative’s system is set up like your home’s electric system. We have fuses and switches just like you do; only the ones we use are a lot larger and more complicated.

Working backward from your house meter, you have a transformer that is protected by a lightning arrestor (that’s a different article) and a fuse protects the system from your transformer. Depending on your location, you may have a line fuse that protects the rest of the system from

your particular line section.

Going upstream, we have oil circuit re-closers (OCRs) or, to make it simple, a breaker. When you have a fault in your home, the breaker trips and the lights go off until you reset it. Our OCRs work a little differently. If a fault occurs, our OCR will open temporarily allowing the fault to clear, and then close back. Yes, you will probably have to reset the clocks, but you will not be out of power for an extended period. If the fault does not clear itself after the first try, the OCR will open again. This can happen three times. After the OCR has gone through its operations, it will stay open if the fault is still on the line. This all happens in a matter of seconds. At this point, the OCR will need to be manually reset after the line has been patrolled by our trained line crews.

At times, we are at the mercy of our generation and transmission provider. Like recently in the Chetopa area, our member’s were affected by a situation that was beyond our control, but your dedicated Twin Valley employees were out double checking every piece of our equipment to insure we did not have a problem.

So, keep an eye on your trees, don’t feed the squirrels near your transformer pole, and if you are out on the back 40 and run across a galvanized guy wire that shines like the front bumper on a '57 Chevy, let us know and we’ll come see what needs to be done to repair it. That’s no bull.

## We Need Your Help

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through 9 p.m. on those hot days when the temperature reaches over 95 degrees. When we turn off anything that consumes electricity, we have reduced the load on the system.

Conservation occurs when we reduce total consumption of electricity, often achieved by simply turning off anything that consumes electricity when not needed.

Energy efficiency is when we replace or upgrade the essentials in our lives (e.g., appliances, lighting, insulation), allowing us to realize the same benefit with less electricity.

If you want to help control your electric bills, assess how much energy your home consumes and evaluate what measures you can take to make your residence more energy efficient.

Then take action. The cumulative effect of such small steps in homes and businesses will have a direct impact on our wholesale power costs—reducing demand during peak periods and lowering overall costs to our consumer-members. Not to mention energy efficiency helps manage load growth and delays the need to build new electric generation facilities.

Twin Valley is working with public officials at all levels to identify and adopt achievable and balanced solutions to keep your electric costs reasonable.

One of quickest remedies involves embracing those “kissing cousins”—load management, conservation and efficiency—and making them part of our daily routine. Although energy consumption will continue to increase, by using electricity more efficiently, we can slow the need for more power plants. Twin Valley urges you to be part of the solution.

## Know What's Below: Call Before You Dig

Whether it's a dreamed up deck addition or a landscaping masterpiece, summer weather is a great time for outdoor improvement plans to actually play out.

But if your planned projects include digging, like planting a tree or bringing in a backhoe for trench

work, you'll have to wait a few more days so the job can be done safely. Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water, and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a summer project into a disaster.

To find out where utility lines run on your property, dial 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging. Your call will be routed to a local "one call" center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes, and cables with flags or marking paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of "Call Before You Dig" services, the majority don't take advantage of the service. A national survey showed that only 33 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before

starting digging projects, according to the Common Ground Alliance, a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals.

Although light gardening typically doesn't call for deep digging, other seemingly simple tasks like planting shrubs or installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines. A severed line can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information about local services, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).

## Go Paperless Today!

Whether you're busy taking care of your family, or just always on the go, we know how hard it is to get everything done in 24 hours. That's why Twin Valley Electric is proud to offer online bill pay.

You have the ability to pay your bills online, view your account history and your statements with our Online Bill Pay system.

Just visit our Web site at [www.twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://www.twinvalleyelectric.coop) and click the Online Bill Pay icon. You'll be directed to our secure site. Once there you will need to create a user ID, the first time you log on. You can then view and pay your bill online. It's really that easy.

Our Online Bill Pay system is secure and designed to protect your account and payment information. Payment methods include personal check, or use your Visa or MasterCard card.



## Tips for Green Summer Cooking

Keep your cool this summer when preparing meals. You can save money and reduce your carbon footprint with these easy tips for going green when cooking summer meals (and year round, for that matter).

- ▶ **Cook outdoors when possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner.** Try a solar cooker or oven. Solar cookers and ovens are by far the most energy-efficient cooking appliances. They require no fuel, reduce unwanted summer heat in your home by taking cooking outside, and can accommodate any food a slow cooker can. To learn more, visit [www.solarcooking.org](http://www.solarcooking.org).
- ▶ **Toaster ovens, convection ovens, and slow cookers get the job done with less energy** than stovetops or ovens, especially when preparing small meals.
- ▶ **Use as small a pan,** as little water, and as little pre-heating time as possible.
- ▶ **Bake in glass or ceramic ovenware instead of metal.** You can turn the temperature down by 25 degrees, and foods will cook in the same amount of time.
- ▶ **Avoid thawing food in the microwave.** Thawing food in the fridge is far more energy efficient, contributes to the fridge's cooling, and is safer than thawing food on the countertop or in the sink.
- ▶ **Don't open the door and peek in the oven.** Use the oven window instead!
- ▶ **Clean burner pans** (the pans under the burners that catch grease) regularly. They'll more effectively reflect heat to the cookware. Dirty burner pans absorb heat and reduce efficiency. Use flat-bottom cookware that rests evenly on the surface of electric coil burners, solid-disk elements, or radiant elements under smooth-top ceramic glass.
- ▶ **Use residual heat.** Turn the stove or oven off before cooking is done to allow cooking to continue while reducing energy use. An electric burner element can be turned off two minutes before removing the cookware, since it remains hot. Ovens can be turned off 20 minutes before cooking's done.



# I PULLED THE PLUG ON MY ENERGY COSTS JUST BY PULLING A FEW PLUGS.

TVs, gaming consoles, DVRs, cable boxes and almost anything that has a plug uses energy even when it's off. I'm saving around \$200 a year by pulling plugs and turning off power strips. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



Touchstone Energy<sup>SM</sup>  
[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)