



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1511 14,000 Rd, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330

866-784-5500

www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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Office Hours

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

Contact Us

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FROM THE MANAGER

Tree Trimming Improves Service for All



Angie Erickson

One of the things I love best about our area is the natural beauty that surrounds us. Warmer temperatures, spring rains, and lots of sunshine have initiated

the growing season. While we welcome green grass, flowers, and leaves on the trees, vegetation growth under and near our power lines poses a problem that must be addressed as it is the leading cause of power outages other than major weather events.

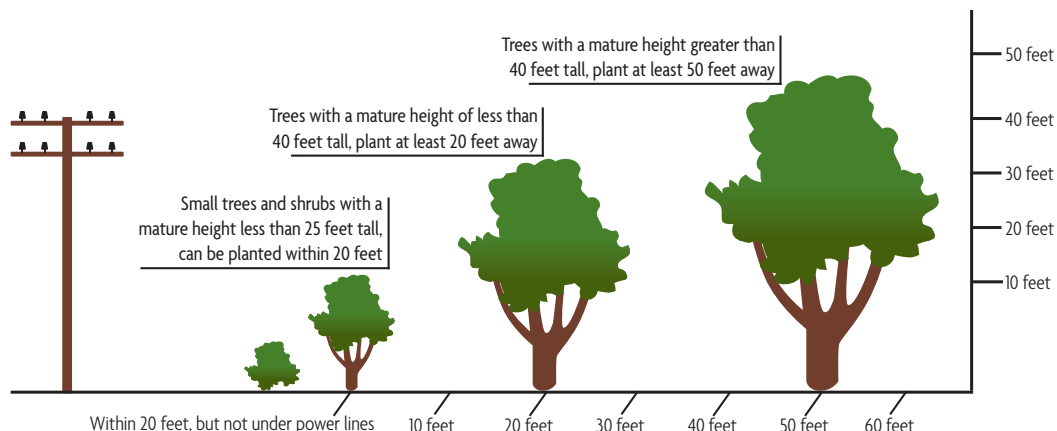
The goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while trimming or removing only what is necessary.

Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, the safety of our members, our lineworkers, and the general public is always a priority. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. Tree trimming also lessens the chances of fallen branches during severe weather events that make it more complicated and

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Happy Mother's Day

May 9, 2021

Join Us for **YOUR** Annual Meeting

July 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Mark Your Calendars for **July 13, 2021**

The Twin Valley Electric Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. More details will follow in next month's issue of *Kansas Country Living*.

Tree Trimming Improves Service for All

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dangerous for lineworkers to restore power, and can create a hazard on or across roadways.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is a reduction of power outages. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed power lines, which causes power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming keeps lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and our technology to maximize the efficiency of our operation. Our outage management system stores historical outage data that is used to identify the areas of our system in the most need of vegetation clearing.

Affordability

As you know, Twin Valley is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we work to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

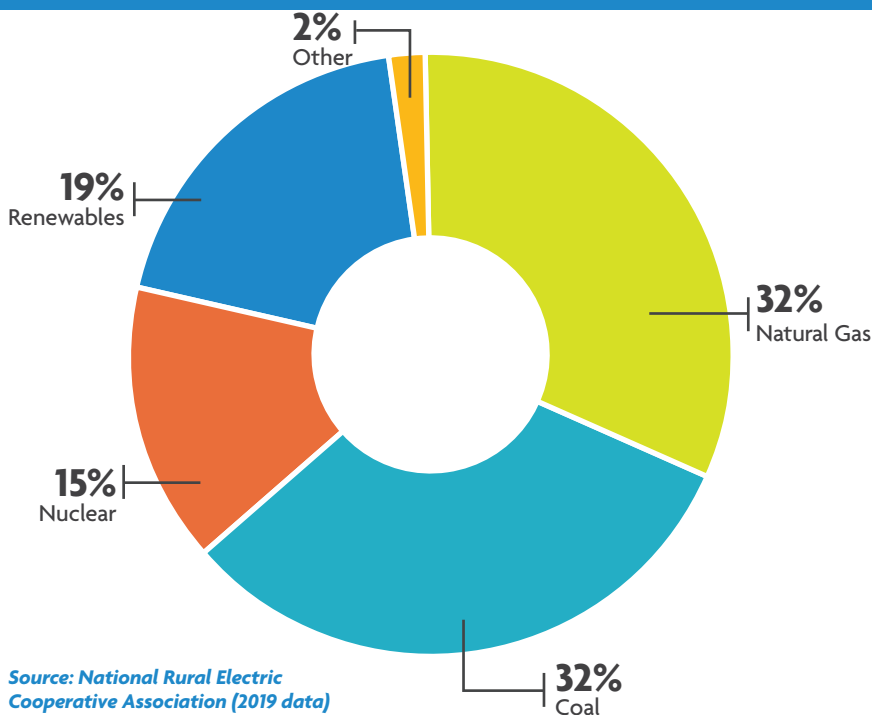
The area Twin Valley services is special. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our members depend on us to provide reliable energy.

Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

Co-op Energy Sources



Nationally, electric cooperatives use a variety of fuels to power consumer-members' homes and businesses. This diverse fuel mix supplies co-op members with the safe, reliable and affordable power they depend on.



Improving Your Yard?

Know what's above and below before you start

When the temperature warms to signal the arrival of spring, many of us begin planning improvements to our outdoor spaces. This could include adding or maintaining a swimming pool, building a deck, adding a patio or assembling play equipment for your family to enjoy. However, it is important to plan for safety prior to adding an outdoor structure or improving your yard.

Power Line Awareness

Being aware of power line locations near your home is vitally important for you and your family's safety. Even drop-down lines — the lines that bring power to a home — have electricity running through them and are dangerous. Always look up and around for power lines, while also recognizing electricity can jump or transfer even without direct contact. Also know what's below the ground before starting any digging job.

Twin Valley Electric and Safe Electricity urge you to consider the following before working in your yard:

- ▶ Assume all power lines are always energized and keep at least 10 feet between a power line and you or any item you are holding.
 - ▶ Perform a hazard assessment of the work area, noting all power line locations.
 - ▶ Call 811 or your state's underground utility locator service to mark underground utilities as part of planning and before any digging. The service is free.
 - ▶ Private lines need to be marked by an independent locating service.
 - ▶ Utility locators do not mark private lines, however. Private underground lines — typically installed by the homeowner or a contractor — include, but are not limited to:
 - ▶ Irrigation or septic system lines.
 - ▶ Lines that service outbuildings (electric, gas, water, communication).
- ▶ Lines between the meter and your home.
 - ▶ Lines to other outdoor items like grills or hot tubs.
 - ▶ Once underground utilities are marked, the 811 "Call Before You Dig" service recommends that the area within 18 to 24 inches of either side of the marked lines be dug by hand with a fiberglass-handled shovel, not by machine.
 - ▶ Do not install tree houses, playsets or swing sets, pools or decks and any associated structures within 25 feet of a power line. Consider the height and reach of play equipment (including the arc of a swing) and all deck and pool structures in relation to power lines.
 - ▶ Educate your children about power line safety and how electricity can jump. Teach them to never touch a power line or get too close to one — either directly or with a toy or object — before sending them outside to play. This is especially important if they climb trees, fly kites or use remote-control (RC) devices, such as an RC airplane or drone.
 - ▶ Use extreme caution when moving ladders and operating long-handled tools, such as pool skimmers, around trees and power lines.
 - ▶ Also use extreme caution and look up and around for power lines when you are elevated, whether it be on a ladder, a boom lift, scaffolding or your roof.
 - ▶ When planting and trimming trees, keep in mind that specialized tree trimming experts certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in utility clearance are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines. Please contact us with questions about specific power line clearance recommendations concerning decks, pools and play structures in your yard.

Help us keep our linemen safe.

Utility poles are not bulletin boards. Foreign objects can tear utility workers' protective clothing leaving them vulnerable to electrocution.

Anyone posting items on utility poles is also at risk of exposure to electricity pulsing overhead. Always stay at least 10 feet away from utility lines.

Think before you post!



Practice Safety When DIY-ing

These days many of us are spending more time at home and finding new, creative ways to enhance our living space. Tackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started! Whether you're painting the front door with a fresh hue or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is incredibly satisfying. But many of these projects do not come without risks. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work.

- ▶ **START BY SELECTING A DESIGNATED WORK AREA.** The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.
- ▶ **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) IS YOUR FRIEND.** We know you're a pro but investing a few bucks in PPE is essential for most home projects. Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, earplugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves, and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Ditch the sandals for projects!
- ▶ **WORK SLOWLY AND CLEAN AS YOU GO.** When you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less desirable results than you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and

remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials and tools that aren't in use and any tripping hazards.

- ▶ **BE CAUTIOUS WITH POWER TOOLS.** Annually, 8% of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:
 - ▶ Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock.
 - ▶ Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
 - ▶ Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
 - ▶ If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
 - ▶ Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
 - ▶ When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.

Remember, you should only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level. For projects that require extensive electrical work, we strongly recommend you hire a licensed, qualified electrician for assistance.

Generate Safely

- ▶ Never use a portable generator indoors.
- ▶ Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets as the current creates an extreme hazard for lineworkers.
- ▶ Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances to the generator.
- ▶ Start the generator before connecting appliances.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**





REMEMBER AND HONOR

MEMORIAL DAY

— ★ ★ ★ —

Our office
will be closed
Monday, May 31,
in observance of
Memorial Day.