



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

866-784-5500

[www.twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://www.twinvalleyelectric.coop)

**TWIN VALLEY  
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

# NEWS

## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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### Office Hours

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

### Contact Us

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## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative Students Attend Summer Programs

**ZAYLAIN BALDWIN** and **ANNA CANTRELL** were selected to attend a cooperative-sponsored educational youth program held this summer. Baldwin and Cantrell were selected based on leadership skills, academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and character demonstrated during the application, testing and interview process conducted in February.

Baldwin attended the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 15-22, 2023, along with 30 other student leaders from Kansas and Hawaii. These high schoolers were sponsored by a total of 22 participating electric cooperatives across Kansas and Hawaii.

During Youth Tour, Baldwin, currently a high school junior from Oswego, visited many national memorials including Arlington National Cemetery and the Changing of the Guards, Washington Monument, World War II Memorial, U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Students also toured the National Law Enforcement Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and several of the Smithsonian museums. This year, the students also toured the White House. They met with Senators Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall and their staff at the U.S. Capitol.

“We learned the history of electric co-ops, what it exactly is, the principles that make co-ops, and how truly unique each of our hometown co-ops are,” said one student. “It truly amazes me how a community, even a small one, can make such a large impact with a lot of passion and dedication.”

Along with learning all about history of our country and patriotism of the capitol, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour included a dinner cruise on the Potomac River, a performance at the Kennedy Center’s Family Theater, and a Washington Nationals vs. St. Louis Cardinals baseball game. There was also a NRECA Youth Program with speakers, games and activities with other state delegations.



**Zaylain Baldwin on the U.S. Capitol steps during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.**



**Anna Cantrell poses in front of the Elk River during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.**

*Continued on page 12C ▶*

# 5 Factors to Consider Before INSTALLING HOME SOLAR

## Find out your home's energy use.

Look at your energy bill(s) to review kWh usage for the past 12-24 months and calculate the average monthly usage.

## Contact your electric utility.

Because most residential systems are tied to the power grid, reach out about connection requirements, fees and possible incentives.

## Location, location, location.

Start considering panel location. Assess the age, size and condition of your roof as well as available ground space.

## Get several quotes.

There are costs other than equipment, such as permitting, installation and inspection. Make sure all costs are included in quotes.

## Do your homework.

Ensure the company you are considering has installers who are specially trained and certified to install solar, among other factors.

To learn more, visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov) and search for "Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar." Use the drop-down titled "How Much Power Can I Generate with Solar?" for information on PVWatts, a solar energy production and cost estimator.

## To Mow or Not to Mow: Recommended Heights for Fall

Some grass species benefit from mowing at higher end heading into winter

BY MADDY ROHR, K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

While opinions vary on how high to mow the home's lawn as the fall temperatures lower, Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham shares the science behind why certain species of grass should be kept short in the cold temperatures.

He said winter tolerance differs among warm-season and cool-season grasses, but both benefit from healthy maintenance practices, including fertilizing, watering and mowing during the spring, summer and fall.

"Cold tolerance is improved by increasing the health of the plants going into the winter, and healthy plants are a result of a sound management program," Upham said.

The recommended lawn height (in inches) for homeowners in Kansas is:

- ▶ Tall fescue: 2.5-3.5
- ▶ Kentucky bluegrass: 2-3
- ▶ Buffalo grass: 2-3
- ▶ Bermuda grass: 1-2
- ▶ Zoysia grass: 1-2

"The lawn will benefit more from continuing to mow at the recommended height than from

trying to gain some insulation against winter cold by allowing it to grow tall," Upham said.

Some variability in the recommended lawn height is beneficial to certain grasses throughout the year.

"For example, it is a good practice to mow warm-season grasses at the higher end of recommended heights during late summer and early fall because this practice should help them store more carbohydrate reserves for the winter, and it may reduce the incidence of certain cool-weather diseases," he said.

Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Upham at [wupham@ksu.edu](mailto:wupham@ksu.edu), or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a heating system tune-up? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

SOURCE: [WWW.ENERGY.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGY.GOV)



# Hearing Loss Common in Farming, Can Be Prevented

BY MADDY ROHR, K-STATE RESEARCH AND  
EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

Natural hearing loss comes with age, but exposure to a loud environment — common in agriculture — can cause noise-induced hearing loss, said a pair of Kansas State University safety experts.

Loud machinery, equipment and even animals can play a role in hearing loss related to farming and ranching, said Brad Dirks, associate director of the K-State physician assistance program.

“Exposure hearing loss can be from a one time experience like a loud concert or using a circular saw without protection,” Dirks said. “Cumulative (hearing loss) can happen over time, like working 40 to 50 years around machinery that push you above the decibel cutoff of 80 to 85.”

For reference, Dirks said people talk at about 60-70 decibels, a movie theater ranges from 75-105 decibels and a motorcycle produces 80-110 decibels.

“How close you are to the noise and how long you're exposed is very important,” Dirks said.

Tractors with a cab are more muffled compared to those without, and machinery in open spaces will dissipate noise compared to those in enclosed areas. Tractors normally produce 110-120 decibels.

Animals can also cause exposure to hearing loss. Their effect is often overlooked when compared to machinery.

“Pigs squealing can be around 100 decibels, and so prolonged exposure to something like pigs ... in a closed environment can be a problem,” said Tawnie Larson, project coordinator with the Carl and Melinda Helwig Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

She also mentioned the noise from working cattle and calves that are calling

back and forth with mothers as being a cause of hearing loss.

Dirks recommends using foam plugs in ears or earmuffs as a preventative measure.

“If you really want to protect your ears, do both; use the foam earplugs and then put the headphones or the earmuffs over and it becomes much more protective in those environments,” he said.

Ear plugs are convenient to keep in pockets and many headphones can be carried around the neck until needed.

“Producers, parents or managers need to think about providing everyone that's working with them and working on the farm or ranch to have something that can protect their ears,” Larson said.

Youth and babies are also at risk of induced hearing loss and should be provided with appropriate protection at an early age.

“It's a cumulative thing, so the younger you start with that noise exposure, the more years you have to be exposed to high noise levels,” Dirks added.

Hearing safety is important because it is permanent, and not something that can be fixed.

“And you can get hearing assistive devices, hearing aids that will amplify (sound), but that vocal range and the high range of those sound waves is gone — and once it's gone, it's gone. You can't bring them back,” Dirks said.

Dirks added that hearing loss can also come from an obstruction in the canal, such as wax or build up. Those can be solved by a doctor.

“(Hearing loss) is preventable,” Larson said. “You can turn it down, walk away, or you can wear hearing protection. (Protection) is pretty easy to find at any hardware store.”



## Twin Valley Electric Cooperative Students Attend Summer Programs

*Continued from page 12A* ▶

Cantrell attended Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, July 14-20, 2023. The camp hosted 71 student leaders from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. These high schoolers were sponsored by a total of 44 participating electric cooperatives across the four states.

During camp, Cantrell, currently a high school junior from Coffeyville, learned how an electric cooperative is organized and operated by developing a model-cooperative with her fellow students, empowering campers to elect a board of directors, appoint a general manager, establish committees, and attend daily membership meetings. CYLC participants also attended educational seminars on leadership, conflict management, co-op careers, a high voltage safety demo by Y-W Electric and Yampa Valley Electric lineman, and a tour of the Yampa Valley Electric community solar array. Camp participants also toured Craig Power Station in Craig, Colorado.

Along with its professional development programs, CYLC included a visit to Mount Werner and downtown Steamboat Springs, whitewater rafting on the Colorado River, and other fun activities such as a volleyball tournament, swimming, talent show and a dance.

“Twin Valley is proud to continue our sponsorship of our co-op's student leaders,” said Angie Erickson, CEO. “It is an honor to provide opportunities that develop leadership potential and encourage engagement in our local communities.”

Twin Valley Electric sponsors trips for two high school students each year. For more information about the Twin Valley youth programs, contact Marsha Moses at 620-784-5500 or visit [www.twinvalleyelectric.coop](http://www.twinvalleyelectric.coop) in December for more information.

# HELP THE LINEWORKER RESTORE POWER

Occasionally, severe weather can cause power disruptions. When outages occur, our lineworkers get to work! They restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

Help the lineworker reach the transformer to fix the power outage.

