

COMMON *Ground*

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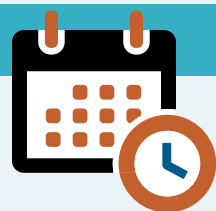
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 Nemaha-Marshall Electric
Cooperative Association, Inc.

COINCIDENT PEAK



**NOV. 30, 2025,
AT HOUR
ENDING 7 P.M.**

FROM THE MANAGER

Winter Pressures Prompt Protective Planning



Kathleen O'Brien

As I write this article on Dec. 1 for the January issue, we are getting our first measurable snow of the winter season. And while we have not seen significantly cold

weather, I'm sure Old Man Winter will deliver plenty of frigid temperatures.

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, more lighting and household appliances. Heating systems run longer and more frequently to maintain

comfortable indoor temperatures. Combine that with the fact that most people use electricity at the same times — typically in the mornings and early evenings — and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

During the winter months, when homes and businesses across the country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach — or occasionally exceed — available supply. This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops, or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity. In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator, Southwest Power Pool, may call for temporary,

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SAVE THE DATE

Join us for the 2026 Nemaha-Marshall Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on **FEB. 17, 2026**, at the American Legion Building in Axtell. We can't wait to see you there!

Save Money With a DIY Home Energy Audit

Want to cut costs and make your home more comfortable? A DIY home energy audit can uncover hidden energy drains, like leaky windows, drafty ducts and inefficient appliances. Identifying trouble spots now can set you up for savings and comfort year-round.

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP EFFICIENCY GUIDE

Before you dive in, grab a few basic tools: flashlight, dust mask, tape measure and something to take notes (your phone works great!). We'll start with simple, no-cost changes you can make right away, then move on to tasks that take a little more effort.

STEP 1: ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT

- ▶ Revisit your thermostat settings each season. Lowering the temperature at night or when no one is home is a simple way to cut costs.
- ▶ Use a smart thermostat for even greater savings. It automatically adjusts based on your schedule.

STEP 2: LOWER WATER HEATER TEMPERATURE

- ▶ Lower your water heater temperature to save money and reduce the risk of scalding burns. Some water heaters are factory-set to 140 degrees, but most households only need 120 degrees.

STEP 3: FIND AND FIX ENERGY VAMPIRES

- ▶ Shut off energy vampires — devices that draw electricity even when turned off. This idle load can account for 23% of your home's energy use.
- ▶ Unplug appliances when not in use and fully power down devices like computers or gaming consoles.
- ▶ Use a smart power strip to shut off multiple electronics at once — it's

an easy way to stop energy waste at the source.

STEP 4: CHECK YOUR LIGHTING

- ▶ Swap out older bulbs, like incandescent or CFLs, for LEDs. They use less energy and last longer. Lighting can account for about 10% of your electric bill.
- ▶ Add dimmers or timers to cut down on wasted electricity.
- ▶ Don't overlook outdoor fixtures. Choose LEDs with features like daylight shut-off or motion sensors for even more savings.

STEP 5: REVIEW MAJOR APPLIANCES

- ▶ Replace air filters to keep your system running efficiently.
- ▶ Look for the Energy Star label when buying new. If your refrigerator, washer, dryer or heat pump is more than 10 years old, it may be worth replacing rather than repairing. Newer appliances are more energy-efficient and can often pay for themselves in savings within a few years.
- ▶ Check your heating and cooling systems. Their lifespan can range from 10-30 years depending on the type and maintenance. If yours is older, start planning ahead for an upgrade.

STEP 6: SEAL LEAKS

Air leaks can waste 10%-20% of your home's energy each year, but they're often simple to fix. Here's where to look and how to seal them.

- ▶ Check baseboards, floor edges and wall-to-ceiling joints indoors.
- ▶ Focus on where different materials meet outdoors.
- ▶ Pay special attention to windows, doors, light fixtures, plumbing and outlets.
- ▶ Use caulk for gaps around windows, doors and baseboards.
- ▶ Add weatherstripping to doors and operable windows.

STEP 7: INSPECT INSULATION

CHECK ATTIC INSULATION:

- ▶ Grab your dust mask and tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be at least 12 inches deep, but you may need more depending on the type and your climate. Check www.EnergyStar.gov for recommended R-values.
- ▶ Spread insulation evenly. Loose-fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy and evenly distributed, while rolled batt insulation should fit snugly with no gaps.

INSPECT EXTERIOR WALLS:

- ▶ Check insulation by turning off the power, removing an outlet cover or switch plate and shining a flashlight into the cavity. Many homes built before the 1960s have little to no insulation, and houses from the 1960s-70s often need more.
- ▶ Call a professional to blow in insulation (from the outside or inside) if wall insulation is missing.

DON'T FORGET THE BASEMENT:

- ▶ Ensure rim joists (the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the first floor) are well insulated in unfinished basements.
- ▶ Insulate the underside of the floor between the joists in crawl spaces.
- ▶ Add insulation to pipes and ductwork for an extra efficiency boost.

FOR RENTERS: You may not be able to make major upgrades, but you can ask your landlord to seal leaks or start small with temporary fixes.

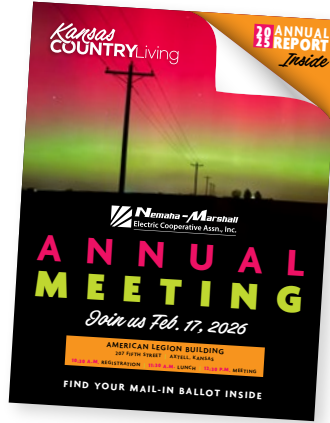
ENJOY YOUR ENERGY SAVINGS

Congratulations — you've taken important first steps toward lowering your energy bills and boosting comfort. Want to go further? A professional home energy audit can provide a complete plan to reduce waste, maximize savings, and make your home more efficient year-round.



Watch for the Special February Issue

Your annual report will be included within the pages of the February issue of this magazine. A special cover wrap on the issue will include the notice of the annual meeting, agenda, trustee candidates and mail-in ballot.



HEATING SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER



Simple precautions can help you avoid **FIRE HAZARDS** and **ELECTRICAL DANGERS.**

There is nothing like curling up by the fire on a cold winter day. But heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. With a few simple steps, you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

STAY COZY AND SAFE THIS WINTER:

- ▶ Maintain a 3-foot zone around heating equipment like furnaces, radiators, fireplaces, electric or wood stoves and space heaters where no items, kids or pets enter.
- ▶ Plug heaters and electric fireplaces directly into wall outlets and only one appliance into an electrical outlet at a time.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- ▶ Never use your oven to heat your home.
- ▶ Test smoke alarms every month.
- ▶ Hire a qualified professional to install or service stationary heating equipment and water heaters.
- ▶ Have your heating system, vents and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

SMART TIPS

- ▶ Install and test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to alert you before it's too late.
- ▶ Create your home fire escape plan and practice it with your family.

OUTAGES FOR NOVEMBER 2025

Occasionally, a part or parts of the delivery system fail and an outage occurs. Below are the larger outages that occurred.

Date	Location	Substation	Number of Consumers	Outage Cause
Oct. 27	34-1-12-12	Seneca	1	Squirrel Tripped Transformer
Nov. 6	14-2-07-07	Marysville	1	Bad Hot Line Clamp
Nov. 7	04-1-06-16	Lone Elm	12	Sprayer Hit Line
Nov. 11	19-5-12-05	Centralia	25	Squirrel Burned Up Transformer

POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability.

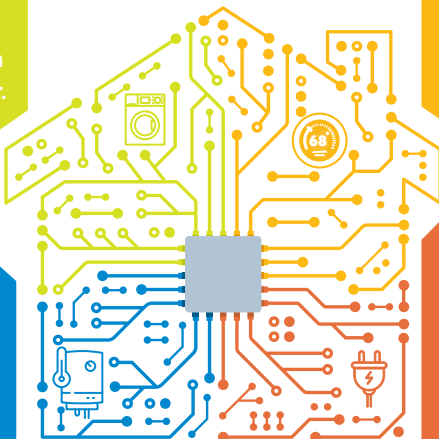
Here are four simple ways you can help:

Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.

Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.

Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.

Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.



SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

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controlled outages — often referred to as rolling blackouts — to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, Nemaha-Marshall Electric will provide timely updates and information to members through our website, Facebook page, and text messages if we have your cellphone on file.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, Nemaha-Marshall takes proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning. We spend much of our winter months doing tree trimming and spraying vegetation to minimize regrowth. Since 2007, we've used stronger poles with shorter spans of wire to reinforce our infrastructure. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort — and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

You can help by taking simple actions during periods of high electricity use, especially on the coldest days of winter:

- ▶ **LOWER YOUR THERMOSTAT SLIGHTLY.** Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help.
- ▶ **DELAY USING LARGE APPLIANCES DURING PEAK HOURS, WHICH ARE TYPICALLY 4-8 P.M.** Run dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during off-peak hours — typically midday or late evening.
- ▶ **ADJUST YOUR WATER HEATER.** Setting it to 120 degrees

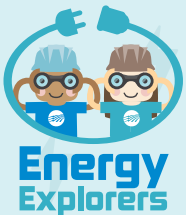
and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.

- ▶ **UNPLUG UNNECESSARY DEVICES.** Power used for lighting and electronics adds up and accounts for a significant portion of home energy use. Disconnect unused items to reduce energy waste.

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill — you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community. Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on, and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season.

The new year also brings changes here at the cooperative. The board of trustees has named **KIM BROXTERMAN** as the new general manager, and she will take over responsibilities on April 1. Kim has been the office manager for 14 years and has a working knowledge of the office operations.

Finally, be sure to join us at our annual meeting on Feb. 17 at the Axtell American Legion. It is National Random Acts of Kindness Day, so reach out and do something kind that day. And, after you've completed all those random acts, remember it is also National Cabbage Day, so enjoy your favorite cabbage dish — or for those old enough to remember the 1980's fad ... dig out your Cabbage Patch doll and share a memory.



POP QUIZ ELECTRICITY TERMS

How well do you know terms related to electricity? Test your knowledge! **Read the definitions below. Then, look at the word bank to match the correct terms to the definitions.** You can only use the words once, so choose carefully. Check your work in the answer key.

WORD BANK

Conductor

Volt (Voltage)

Circuit

Static Electricity

Insulator

1. A complete path that electricity flows through.

2. Something that allows electricity to pass through, such as metal or wire.

3. The standard unit of measurement for electricity.

4. Something that does not allow electricity to pass through easily, such as rubber.

5. Electricity build-up caused by rubbing two surfaces together.

ANSWER KEY: 1. CIRCUIT 2. CONDUCTOR 3. VOLT (VOLTAGE) 4. INSULATOR 5. STATIC ELECTRICITY