



COMMON Ground

NEMAHA-MARSHALL ELECTRIC CO-OP ASSN., INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

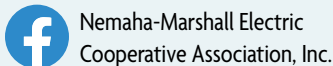
- David J. Ronnebaum**
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- Robert L. Voet**
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STAFF

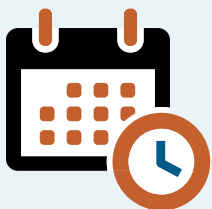
- Kathleen M. O'Brien**
General Manager
- Trevor Wohlford**
Corporate Attorney
- Kimberly R. Broxterman**
Office Manager
- Justin R. Burdick**
Accountant
- Patrick J. Holthaus**
Line Superintendent

CONTACT US

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 Axtell, KS 66403
 785-736-2345
 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
 www.nemaha-marshall.coop



COINCIDENT PEAK



JAN. 23, 2026
AT HOUR
ENDING 7 P.M.

FROM THE MANAGER

From Light Switches to Last Columns

This is the last manager article I will write before my March 31 retirement, and I wanted to use a little humor while talking about reliability. So, sit back and I hope you enjoy the article as much as I have enjoyed serving as your general manager.

After 36 years in the electric utility business, I can say with confidence that the most underrated athletic event in modern life is the light switch flip. No stretching. No warm-up. Just a flick of the wrist and — presto — illumination. There is no wild crowd cheering at this event and no instant replay. You don't notice anything at all, which is a true sign of success.

Most people believe electricity is

powered by sorcery, tiny lightning elves, or perhaps a sun god. When you flip a switch, you expect — no, assume — the lights will come on. Instantly.

Effortlessly. As if Thomas Edison himself is pedaling a bicycle generator just for you. Let me assure you, it's not magic. It's not elves. And Edison hasn't pedaled a bicycle in a very long time.

When the lights come on, nobody applauds Nemaha-Marshall. You don't



Kathleen O'Brien

Continued on page 12C ▶

OUTAGES FOR DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026

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
Nov. 28	02-3-12-06	Seneca	1	Fuse Tap Tripped
Dec. 1	18-5-11-03	Centralia	272	Vehicle Hit Every Line
Dec. 1	33-4-09-03	Frankfort	251	Vehicle Hit Every Line
Dec. 2	28-2-13-09	Seneca	19	Wire Down
Dec. 10	03-2-10-03	East Axtell	3	Broken Jumper
Dec. 10	29-1-10-08	Snipe Creek	6	Broken Jumper
Dec. 29	15-3-07-08	Marysville	1	Bad Hot Line Clamp
Jan. 5	16-2-11-08	East Axtell	1	Consumer Hit Meter Pole
Jan. 12	30-2-13-09	Seneca	1	Bad Transformer
Jan. 16	26-1-04-01	Hanover	1	Broken Jumper
Jan. 19	27-2-10-14	Snipe Creek	1	Bad Transformer

Tornado Safety and Electrical Hazards

Tornadoes can strike with little warning, leaving behind downed power lines, damaged electrical equipment and dangerous debris. Preparing before a tornado — and knowing how to stay safe afterward — can help prevent electrical shock, fire and injury. Make sure your emergency plan includes electrical safety steps so you and your family are ready to act quickly and safely.

BEFORE A TORNADO:

- ▶ Prepare an emergency kit with water, battery-powered flashlight, radio, extra batteries and portable phone charger.
- ▶ Keep your electric utility's phone number handy in case you need to report an outage or downed line.
- ▶ Fully charge cell phones and backup power banks before severe weather hits so you can use them in an emergency.

DURING A TORNADO:

- ▶ Seek shelter immediately in a basement or a small, interior room with no windows, such as a bathroom or closet.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug appliances and electronics to protect them from power surges. Leave one light on so you'll know when power is restored.
- ▶ Do not stay inside a vehicle or try to outrun a tornado. Exit the vehicle and seek shelter in a sturdy building. If none are available, lie flat in a low-lying area away from the vehicle and power lines.

AFTER A TORNADO:

- ▶ Stay away from downed power lines and anything they could touch, such as trees,

fences or debris. Always assume they are energized.

- ▶ If you see a downed line while driving, do not exit your vehicle. Call 911 and your utility and warn others to stay away.
- ▶ Do not touch anyone who is in contact with a power line. Call 911 immediately and wait for emergency responders.
- ▶ Do not enter damaged buildings until electricity and gas are shut off by professionals. Never attempt to turn off power if you must stand in water to reach the breaker.
- ▶ Avoid flooded areas with electrical outlets, appliances, or cords, and never touch electrical equipment when wet or standing in water.
- ▶ Have all water-damaged electrical systems, appliances and devices inspected by a licensed electrician before use.

POWER OUTAGES AND GENERATOR SAFETY:

- ▶ Never use a generator indoors or in partially enclosed spaces such as garages or porches, or near open windows and doors. Place a generator at least 20 feet away from your home to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ▶ Keep the generator dry by placing it on a tarp or under a canopy and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- ▶ Never plug a generator directly into a wall outlet. This can inadvertently energize power lines and pose a lethal risk to you, neighbors and utility workers.

Stay informed, stay alert, and share this information to help protect your family and community during severe weather events.

Spring Forward
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR
 🌸🌸 Sunday, March 8, 2026 🌸🌸

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills, and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring. SOURCE: NRECA



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From Light Switches to Last Columns *Continued from page 12A* ▶

call your friends. You don't post it on Facebook. You simply proceed to find your socks. That's how we like it. Because the day you do notice us is the day something has gone terribly wrong.

Behind every flip are engineers, lineworkers, accountants, customer service folks and at least one person who knows where that tricky breaker is. Our job is to make electricity so reliable that it feels like a law of nature, right up there with gravity.

We spend our days preparing for all types of events. Take storms, for example. When a thunderstorm rolls in, most people grab a snack and enjoy the show — myself included. Meanwhile, our crews are preparing for battle. Trucks are fueled. Chain saws are sharpened. Rain gear is deployed. So, when a tree decides to do a belly flop onto a power line at 2 a.m., our linemen are out there in the dark, wrestling the wires back in place so your refrigerator can continue its mission of keeping leftovers alive.

Reliability involves many things. The tree that needs to be trimmed because it grows faster when no one is looking.

Equipment that chooses the coldest, darkest night of the year to express its feelings. Inspections, upgrades, and other small fixes that make sure voltage stays steady and power flows smoothly. There are miles of wire you will never see, substations you will never visit, and endless planning spreadsheets that would give you a headache. All so you can flip a switch and microwave those leftovers without a second thought.

But despite the challenges and the occasional squirrel with a death wish, it has been an honor to keep the lights on. My proudest moments were when storms came and went with barely an outage. The nights when crews worked in the rain and went home without anyone knowing which linemen lost sleep. The mornings when the lights simply were — on.

So, the next time you flip a switch and the room fills with light, take a moment to appreciate the dedicated Nemaha-Marshall employees who made that moment possible.

And, if the lights don't come on — well — **DON'T** call me. I'm retired.

Local Students Win Rural Electric Co-op Youth Tour Competition

Nemaha-Marshall is proud to announce the winners of this year's Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Competition, an annual program designed to educate local high school students about electric cooperatives, inspire leadership and encourage civic engagement.

Six area students participating in the competition were challenged to demonstrate their knowledge of electric cooperative history and operations through a multiple choice, true/false test. The students were interviewed by the members of the cooperative's board of trustees, where they shared their interests, goals and understanding of how electric cooperatives serve their communities.

ARIELLE LINDEEN, of Axtell High School, is the overall winner of the 2026 Rural Electric Youth Tour Competition.

Lindeen will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to

Washington, D.C., where she will join other students from across the nation to learn firsthand about government, history and the role electric cooperatives play at the national level.

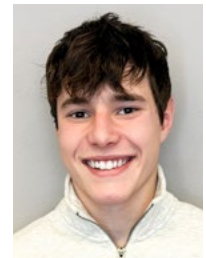
The cooperative also congratulates **LINCOLN MENOLD**, of Sabetha High School, who was the runner-up in the competition. Menold will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, offering a unique educational experience focused on leadership development, teamwork and exploration.

Both students impressed the board with their knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm, making the selection process especially competitive this year. The electric cooperative is proud to support opportunities that invest in the next generation of leaders and encourage young people to learn more about the cooperative difference.

We extend our congratulations to both winners and thank all the students who participated in this year's competition. Their interest and dedication reflect a bright future for our communities and electric cooperatives everywhere.



Arielle Lindeen



Lincoln Menold





LIEAP

12224900

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIEAP can help pay your home heating bills!

Applications accepted
**Jan. 20, 2026—
March 31, 2026**

Applications **must** be received by DCF
by **5 p.m. on March 31, 2026.**

INCOME GUIDELINES

Persons living at address	Maximum gross monthly income
1	\$ 1,956
2	\$ 2,644
3	\$ 3,331
4	\$ 4,019
5	\$ 4,706
6	\$ 5,394
7	\$ 6,081
8	\$ 6,769
each additional	\$ 688

Qualifying households must:

- **not exceed household income limits**
- **be personally responsible** for the heating fuel costs payable either to the landlord, utility company, or a fuel vendor



Learn more about LIEAP
and apply online at
LIEAP.dcf.ks.gov.

Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Community Services - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.