



SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# currentnews

## SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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**Scott Ayres**  
General Manager/CEO

**Lora Alloway**  
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**Kyle Pipkin**  
Line Superintendent

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### HEADQUARTERS

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### FROM THE MANAGER

## Working Together to Lower Demand



**Scott Ayres**

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, 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.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative works closely with Kansas Electric Power Cooperative,

our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes to ensure our members have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to make certain electricity is available whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our local system is part of a much larger regional and national 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

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## ANNUAL MEETING IS APRIL 7

The Annual Membership Meeting of Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will be held on **TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026**, at The Cotillion, 11120 W. Kellogg in Wichita.

- ▶ Doors will open at 6:15 p.m., and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.
- ▶ Cooperative update.
- ▶ Door prizes.
- ▶ Youth Tour winners announced.
- ▶ Employee service awards and introductions.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION NOTIFICATION

Do you live in one of the following territories? Would you like to run for the Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors? To request a board of directors application, contact Executive Assistant Jo Luehrs at 316-542-3131 or [jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop](mailto:jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop). **DEADLINE TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION IS FEB. 6, 2026.** Voting will take place at the annual membership meeting on April 7, 2026.

### TERRITORY 1

**NORTH OF 109TH ST. N. (IRISH CREEK ROAD)**

► **CINDY FOSTER** – Incumbent

### TERRITORY 2

**SOUTH OF 109TH ST. N., NORTH OF US 54, EAST OF 167TH ST. WEST**

► **ALAN SMARSH** – Incumbent

### TERRITORY 3

**EAST OF 167TH ST. W., SOUTH OF US 54**

► **REX SMITH** – Incumbent

## Winter Safety for Outdoor Workers

Working outdoors in the cold? Here's how to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia this winter.

When the temperature drops, so does your body's ability to stay safe. Outdoor workers — and those who enjoy outdoor sports like hunting, fishing or hiking — face added risks and must take extra steps to guard against frostbite and hypothermia.

Follow these tips and have a plan to stay safe when working outdoors:

► **WATCH THE WEATHER.** Monitor the temperature and wind chill. Take frequent breaks indoors to help prevent cold stress.

► **STAY WARM AND DRY.** Dress in loose, warm layers. Wear a moisture-wicking base, an insulating mid-layer, and a protective outer layer (flame-resistant/arc-rated if required for your work). Use warm socks and waterproof boots. Remove any wet clothing as quickly as possible.

► **PROTECT YOUR HEAD AND FACE.** Use a hat, hood or hard-hat liner. When required for your job, choose FR/AR-rated liners or balaclavas. Avoid bulky hats or loose scarves.

► **KEEP YOUR HANDS SAFE.** Wear insulated gloves or mittens to guard against frostbite. When working with electricity, always use voltage-rated protective gloves with approved liners — never substitute regular winter gloves for necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).

► **FUEL YOUR BODY.** Drink warm fluids, stay hydrated and eat high-energy foods.

► **KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS.** Watch for frostbite (numbness, skin color changes) and hypothermia (shivering, confusion, slurred speech).

► **BE PREPARED ON THE ROAD.** Keep a winter emergency kit in your vehicle with blankets, traction aids, and extra PPE.

### RECOGNIZING FROSTBITE

Frostbite happens when skin and tissue lose circulation and freeze, commonly affecting fingers, toes, ears and nose.

### SYMPOTMS OF FROSTBITE

- Numbness or tingling in the affected area
- Skin that turns red, white or bluish gray
- Cold, hard or waxy-looking skin
- Stiff muscles and joints

### TREATING FROSTBITE

- If possible, move indoors to a warm place.
- Warm the affected area with warm (not hot) water, or place hands under armpits.
- Avoid rubbing or massaging frostbitten skin, as this may cause further damage.
- Seek medical attention for severe frostbite or skin with blisters.

### RECOGNIZING HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops dangerously low.

### SYMPTOMS OF HYPOTHERMIA

- Shivering
- Confusion or slurred speech
- Drowsiness or exhaustion
- Slow, shallow breathing

### TREATING HYPOTHERMIA

- If possible, move indoors to a warm place.
- Call 911 immediately, especially if the person is unconscious.
- Provide warm fluids, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
- Remove any wet clothing and warm the torso with layers of blankets or clothing.
- Wrap the body and head, leaving the face uncovered.
- If layers are not available, add body heat.

Cold weather brings unique challenges, from icy roads to freezing winds that make outdoor work even more hazardous. Lineworkers and other outdoor professionals face these risks daily to keep essential services running.

When temperatures drop, look out for one another and take steps to stay safe. Prevention matters — limit your time in the elements, wear proper protective clothing, and stay alert. Working smart in the cold helps ensure everyone makes it home safely.

# Working Together to Lower Demand

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demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator, Southwest Power Pool, may call for temporary, controlled outages — often referred to as rolling blackouts — to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will provide information to members through Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative's website.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative and our G&T partner take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning. Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative contracts yearly with a tree crew to manage vegetation around our power lines. Oil circuit

breakers are serviced yearly along with crews conducting yearly line patrol maintenance. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. 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:

- 1 LOWER YOUR THERMOSTAT SLIGHTLY.** Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help.
- 2 DELAY USING LARGE APPLIANCES DURING PEAK HOURS, WHICH ARE 3-6 P.M.** Run dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during off-peak hours — typically midday or late evening.

## 3 ADJUST YOUR WATER HEATER.

Setting it to 120 degrees and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.

## 4 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.

## ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR AND COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP APPLICATIONS DUE FEB. 6

Don't miss your chance to attend a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! Applications to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, are **DUEDUE FEB. 6, 2026.**

During the Youth Tour in our nation's capital, your schedule will be full of tours of Capitol buildings, museums and monuments; you will get to attend a performance at the famous Kennedy Center and have the chance to meet with Congressional representatives and senators on Capitol Hill.

At the Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, you will get the chance to experience what the cooperative world is like, creating a candy co-op with your fellow campers. You will also get to participate in leadership workshops, view a high-voltage safety demonstration, and

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**QUESTIONS? CONTACT JO LUEHRS, 316-542-3131, [jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop](mailto:jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop)**

tour a power plant. There will be plenty of fun extracurricular activities too with a volleyball tournament, talent show and river rafting!

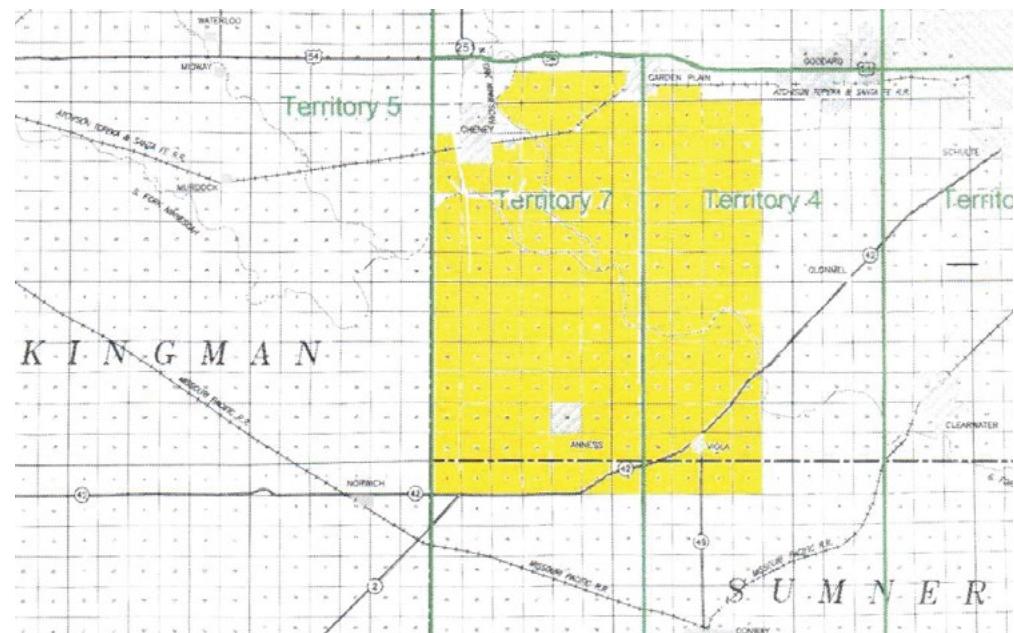
To apply, you must be a high school sophomore or junior, and your parents/guardians must be a Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative residential member. For more information, contact Jo Luehrs, 316-542-3131, [jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop](mailto:jluehrs@sedgwickcountyelectric.coop).

# Why Pole Inspection & Treatment is Necessary

As in the case with most electric utilities, Sedgwick County Electric Co-op is dependent on the use of wooden poles. Even though the poles we use are initially treated to resist decay, over time all wooden poles will deteriorate and ultimately need replaced. The decay rate varies dependent upon soil type, moisture levels, temperatures and the type of wood the pole is derived from.

The objective of our pole inspection and treatment program is to determine if a pole is still useful and safe to prolong its life. Sedgwick County Electric Co-op currently contracts with Global Utility Services to perform our pole inspections and treatment. While a visual inspection is valuable and essential in evaluating the overall condition of the pole, any internal decay below the ground line would go undetected if not for our pole inspection/treatment program.

Our inspection process involves a visual inspection and treatment of each pole in which we look for woodpecker holes, significant cracks, signs of termite and carpenter ant activity, or other defects with the pole that may result in a pole failure and/or rejection. Inspectors then complete a sound and bore test of the pole, where they will expose the pole below the ground line, bore the pole at an angle in two different locations to determine the size of the decayed pocket below the ground line and sound the pole above the ground line with a hammer looking to see if the decayed



Global Utility Services will test and treat poles in service Territory 7 — East of 407th St. W. (170th Ave.), West of 295th St. W., South of U.S. 54 and Territory 4 — South of U.S. 54 to Highway 42, between 295th and 231st.

pocket extends above the ground line. The majority of decay in a wood pole occurs in the first 18 inches below the ground line. Wood preservative is applied to the pole to treat against external rot. If the integrity and strength of a pole is compromised and considered dangerous, the pole is replaced immediately.

By continuing our pole inspection/treatment and pole replacement program, we have extended the useful life of our wooden poles, reduced maintenance costs and increased the reliability and safety of our electric system for all our members.

Global Utility Services will test and treat poles in service **TERRITORY 7** — East of 407th St. W. (170th Ave.), West of 295th St. W., South of U.S. 54 and **TERRITORY 4** — South of U.S. 54 to Highway 42, between 295th and 231st.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.

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

