

December  
2004



Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative

**LANE-SCOTT CONNECTIONS**

P.O. Box 758, 410 S. High St., Dighton, KS 67839  
Phone 620-397-5327

## *From the Manager's Desk - Earl Steffens*

### **Why the Cooperative Business Model?**

The cooperative business model is by far the best method of conducting business. This way of doing business separates us from all other electrical utilities. Why is this so, first of all, the cooperative exists solely to serve the needs of our members and to provide this service at the lowest possible costs. Other electric utilities exist for other purposes, such as providing dividends for investors or for generating revenue from the utility to fund other operations of the entity. Our business model stipulates that we operate as a not-for-profit electric utility. We meet this obligation by designing our electric rates to cover our actual costs of providing electric service. Any additional revenue we receive that exceeds the actual cost of providing electric service is returned to our members through capital credit retirements. Through these capital retirements Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, Inc. has returned just over \$1,500,000. This includes the \$162,500 in capital credits members will have received, if they were on our system in 1982, 1983 or 1984, by the time they read this. These total retirement payments represent the revenue that exceeded operational costs since the cooperative began in 1941.

With this capital credit payment we will now be on a twenty-year rotation of returning capital credits to our members. This means we are returning these funds to our members for the contributions they made to the cooperative for the operational year twenty years prior to payment. The reason we are on a twenty-year rotation of retiring capital credits is that in the early years we simply did not have the funds available to pay capital credits.

We are a not for profit cooperative so there is no incentive for us to generate excessive revenues or profits since we have no stockholders to which we would pay

dividends. Why do we have excess funds available if we are a not-for-profit cooperative? I believe we are very good at projecting our annual expenses. We cannot predict an ice storm or other natural disaster that will require substantial financial resources to make repairs. So we include in our budgeting process a margin that partially serves as a contingency fund to deal with unforeseen expenses. In addition, we are required by our lender through our mortgage obligations to generate sufficient margins to insure that we can make payments on our debt. These margins, if not needed for the aforementioned purposes, represent the amount that exceeds our actual cost of electric service and will be allocated to our members for future payment through our capital credit retirement cycle.

Another big difference between your cooperative and other utilities is local ownership and governance. As a member of the cooperative you join with all our members as the owners of the cooperative. Our member owners have a say in how the cooperative is run through a democratic election process. You elect a Board of Trustees from the membership to insure that your cooperative is being operated in your best interest. This Board of Trustees oversees the operation of the cooperative and meets at least once a month to review with management the financial condition of the cooperative and to provide guidance in how the cooperative should be operated.

These are a couple of the many differences between cooperatives and other electric utilities. However these differences are substantial and definitely separate us from other electric utilities. Our business model and simply the way we do business truly separates us from how other electric utilities operate their businesses.

#### **Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative Newsletter**

Telephone 397-5327  
Owned & Published by  
The Lane-Scott Electric  
Co-op, Inc.  
P.O. Box 758  
410 S. High St.  
Dighton, KS 67839

#### **Board of Directors**

Larry Jasper, Dighton, President  
Dick Jennison, Healy, V. President  
Paul Seib, Ness City, Secretary  
Dick Ramsey, Scott City, Treasurer  
Eric Doll, Garden City  
Ed Gough, Dighton  
Harold Hoss, Ness City  
Bruce Wilkens, Scott City  
Richard Sorem, Jetmore

#### **Staff**

Earl Steffens, General Manager  
Vic Torson, Mgr. of Electrical  
Operations  
Katherine Lewis, Mgr. of Financial  
Services  
Bob Venters, Resale Manager

#### **In Case of Outage**

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, call Dighton, 1-800-407-2217. Office hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After hours calls will be answered by the dispatch and forwarded to standby personnel.

**After Hours & Weekends Call:  
1-800-407-2217**

#### **24-Hour Electrician Emergency Service**

If you are without electricity, or have an electrical emergency on your side of the meter, we have a master electrician on staff available 24 hours a day. To request after-hours electrician service, call the following number:

**1-800-407-2217**

# Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative Meet the Employees

## Mann Enjoys Serving Lane-Scott Members, Solving Challenges

Kalo Mann is a Master Electrician at Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative and is in our Resale Department. Kalo has been with Lane-Scott Electric since 1994. Kalo is a graduate of Quinter High School and Northwest Kansas Area Vocational-Technical School in Goodland, Kansas. Kalo served for six years in the United States Army Reserves. Kalo is married to Tammy and they have two daughters Shayla 15, and Matraca 13.

Kalo says that he enjoys interacting with the members and employees of Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, Inc. Our members and customers present him with interesting electrical challenges that he enjoys solving for them. The biggest change in this area is no different than anywhere else, and that is dealing with the technology the customers expect and deserve now days.

Kalo is an avid hunter, has been involved in competitive pistol shooting competition, and enjoys working with horses. He is currently Vice-President of the Lane County Saddle Club. Kalo enjoys western Kansas and the people in the area.



## These Transformers Aren't For Kids

A transformer? Isn't that the toy that changes from a spaceship to a robot superhero or something?

Well, yes and no. There are toys called Transformers but the transformers we're talking about aren't playthings. The transformers that electric cooperatives and other utilities use are even more powerful and remarkable, however, when you consider the job they do.

Distribution transformers reduce voltage for delivering electricity to consumers, normally 240/120 volts for most services. It is not usual to find one rated 1,000 kilovolt amperes (kva) or more serving a large user. A transformer for a new home is usually rated 10-15 kva (roughly 10 or 15 horsepower).

Transformers vary in size and style but the most common type of distribution transformer, the can-shaped steel tanks often seen near the cross-arms of a utility pole, contain thousands of feet of wire coiled around a special laminated steel core. The tank is filled with insulating oil.

The pole-mounted can is easily recognized but "pad-mounted" transformers, called that because they are mounted on concrete pads, are found in many neighborhoods where co-op power is delivered through underground lines. Pad-mounted transformers are housed in large, green box-shaped metal cabinets.

Teach your children never to play around these transformers, or any type of electrical equipment, but don't let that be the only lesson. The next time you're riding along the highway and see a transformer on a co-op pole, share what you've learned. Who knows, you may have a future co-op lineworker or engineer in the family!



## Decking the Halls with Care Prevents Mishaps

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 3,000 people made emergency room visits last year due to electrical decoration mishaps.

When decorating your home this holiday season, please follow these tips and precautions:

- When purchasing live or cut greenery, carefully inspect the needles. If they're brown or break easily, the greenery isn't fresh and poses a greater fire risk.
- Place your tree in a sturdy, non-tip stand filled with water at all times.
- With an artificial trees or greens, purchase those that are flame-retardant. Do not use electrical decorations or light strands on artificial trees or greens that have metallic needles, leaves, or branch coverings.
- Place your tree or greens at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions concerning installation and maintenance of the electrical decorations you'll be using.
- Inspect each electrical decoration before use for cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections, which may cause a serious electric shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items with new, Underwriters Laboratory approved decorations.
- Don't overload extension cords or connect more than three light string sets together — they could cause the cord to overheat and start a fire.
- Don't allow children or pets to play with light strings, candlelights or other electrical decorations.
- Turn off all electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

# Decorate Safely For The Holidays

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries and an average of more than \$10 million in property loss and damage. The Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests following these tips to make your holiday a safe one:

## Trees:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it at least three feet away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways with the tree.

## Lights:

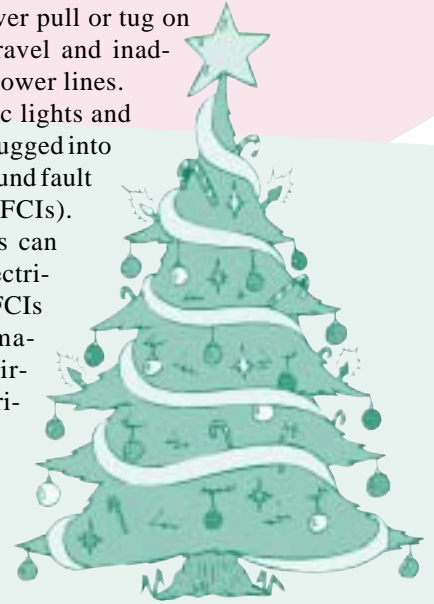
- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Stay away from power or feeder lines leading from utility poles into older homes.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or

other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).

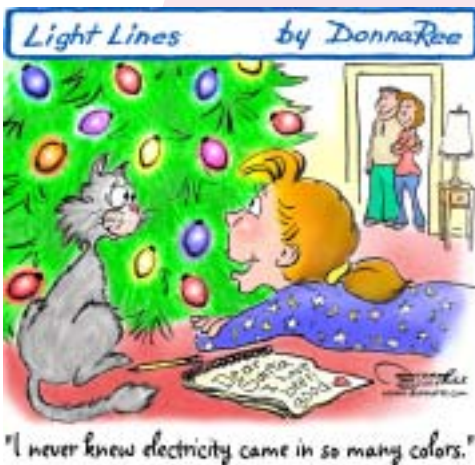
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights—they could unravel and inadvertently wrap around power lines.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

## Decorations:

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Never use lit candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair."



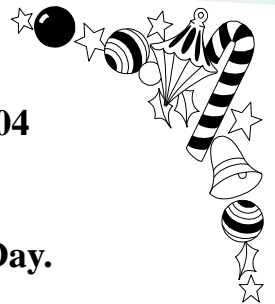
Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission###



## Lane-Scott

will be closed on December 24, 2004  
for the Christmas Holiday.  
Our office will also be closed on  
December 31, 2004 for New Year's Day.

We wish you all a very Merry  
Christmas and Happy New Year.



# Helping the Sun Heat Your Home in Winter

Every home can benefit from free solar energy in the winter. The first step to taking advantage of this solar heat is to understand where the sun moves around your home. In summer, the sun rises in the east or even a little north of east. It rises high overhead and heats your home's east walls, its roof, and then its west walls. It sets in the west or northwest. In winter, the sun takes a low arc across the sky, moving from the southeast to the southwest. Most of the sun's winter heat falls on the south-facing walls of your home.

The key features for harvesting solar heat are your windows. If you replace your windows, select the window glass according to which way the window faces. Most newer windows have insulated glass, which means that they are double-pane windows. This is good in both winter and summer. Many of these double-pane windows also have glass

that is coated with a very thin and almost invisible layer of reflective metal. This low-e coating reduces radiant-heat loss from rooms through the window. The new types of spectrally selective glass, like low-e<sup>2</sup> and Sungate II, are an excellent choice for east and west-facing windows because they also block solar heat in summer. But don't use a spectrally selective glass on the south-facing side if you want solar heat in winter. Standard low-e glass is a better choice for the south-facing windows, but clear double-pane glass is the best choice.

If you have trees or bushes on the south side of your home, be sure they don't block your winter sun. Observe the pattern of shadows on your home in both winter and summer. Remember that the shade cast by tall trees helps block that high summer sun, and this helps keep your home cool. But low-hanging bushes or trees may be blocking



your winter sun, just when you need it the most. Prune these lower branches to let the sun enter your windows in winter.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management ([www.srmi.biz](http://www.srmi.biz))

## Following Fireplace Tips May Improve Heating Efficiency, Prevent Heat Loss

A traditional open fireplace can be one of the most expensive energy problems in many homes. This is because your fireplace's chimney is, in effect, a large hole in your house. This creates drafts elsewhere in your home as cold air is pulled in to replace the air that is sucked up your chimney. A fireplace is also a very inefficient heating device. The hotter the fire gets the more house air goes up the chimney.

If your fireplace has a chimney damper, make sure it is closed when you're not burning a fire. This will slow the flow of warm house air up your chimney. Be sure to open the damper before starting your next fire—perhaps you could hang a small tag from the damper to serve as a reminder.

Many fireplaces also have doors. These doors reduce the amount of indoor air going up the chimney, but don't eliminate air leakage. Keep these closed when no fire is burning to slow the loss of room air.

Fireplace inserts are popular way to improve the efficiency of open fireplaces. A fireplace insert is like a wood stove that is designed to fit into your fireplace. The best inserts have fans that circulate room air through spaces within the insert and distribute it around the room.

Many older fireplaces are never used. The best way to reduce heat waste from these is to seal them off altogether. Seal the chimney

above the roof to keep outdoor water and air out of your home. This outdoor seal should cover the top of the chimney and be made of waterproof galvanized steel or aluminum. Inflatable pillows are also available that seal the area where the fireplace connects with its chimney.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management ([www.srmi.biz](http://www.srmi.biz))

