

LANE-SCOTT CONNECTIONS

P.O. Box 758, 410 S. High St., Dighton, KS 67839

Phone 620-397-5327

Linemen Busy - You Bet They Are!

Here it is spring already and we feel fortunate to get through another winter without an ice storm. We did send crews to the Wellington area to help with the ice storm that hit eastern Kansas and parts of Oklahoma. Several Co-op's in Kansas lost up to 3,000 poles along with all the damaged conductor, other related material, and the wages of all the additional help that was needed. You can see how expensive an ice storm can be.

For those of you that have missed my news article the past few months, I want you to know we have been busy. We had 2,000 poles tested in the Ness and Lane county area and of those tested 85 were rejected and need to be replaced. We were pleased with this rejection as many of these poles were put in around 1950. As for the poles that were not rejected they are treated to give them a longer life span. As you can see with this many poles to replace along with the new connects and general maintenance of our system, our crews have plenty of work ahead of them. Since the beginning of the year, we have changed out some 90 poles and counting.

In April we started our formal line patrol. This is something we do every three years as required by RUS. At this time we patrol out every line that have gathering information on each connect, trees that need trimmed, any line that can be retired, idle services, potential hazards, and any general maintenance that needs to be done. It's like giving your electrical system a complete physical. We hope to be done with this sometime in May. We will also be installing new regulators in the Dighton substations and in the Beeler substations. This will help us this summer when the heavy loading is on our substations.

Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, Inc. is also beginning the incorporation of the GPS (Global Positioning System). This will help us track our work order inventory better, give the ability to locate any meter, transformer, or resident, if someone isn't sure of the exact location. The area that we feel this will be the most beneficial will be in the area of mapping. We will be able to create and update our maps monthly, if we desire.

At Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, Inc. we do have an outstanding group of linemen, who continue to keep your electrical system in as good as shape as possible.

**LANE-SCOTT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
MAKES PAYING YOUR ELECTRIC BILLS EASY!**

Lane-Scott's new **AUTOPAY** option allows the amount of your monthly electric bill to be automatically deducted from your bank account. There's no check to write, no payment to mail, no more forgetting to pay - and, best of all, **AUTOPAY WILL COST YOU NOTHING!** In fact, you will save money and time - no check writing costs, no postage expense, and more time for you!

For more information or to request an **AUTOPAY** authorization form, please call the co-op at (620) 397-5327 or 1-800-407-2217.

**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 Wilkins, Scott City

Staff

Earl Steffens, General Manager

Stan Bray, 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 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.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

Limit Energy Use to One Appliance at a Time

A Kansas State University energy specialist says saving money in the home might be as simple as reducing the number of appliances operating at one time.

Gene Meyer, an Extension mechanical engineer, said utility companies often bill a “capacity charge” as well as for the home’s energy use.

“Capacity charges on a utility bill reflect the maximum average power demand placed on the utility during the billing cycle,” Meyer said.

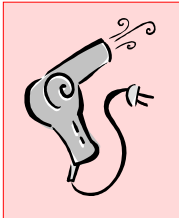
“To reduce the charge for capacity, you must reduce the number of large electric loads that are connected at any one time. This can be done with sophisticated controls, or it can be done more simply by user interaction.”

Ideally, such high-demand appliances as a heat pump, water heater, range and clothes dryer would not be used at the same time. “If you can avoid using them all at the same time, you will reduce your demand,” Meyer said.

He added that controlling when you use smaller loads – such as lighting and other small appliances – also will help. Again, the goal is to not operate them at the same time.

SAFE AND DRY

During the 1980s, an average of 18 electrocutions occurred each year that were caused by hand-held hair dryers falling into or being pulled into water.



Although new hair dryers that offer added protection against electrocution are available—and hair dryer-related deaths have dropped to an average of four per year—it’s estimated that

millions of older dryers are still in use and still present a danger if they aren’t used with ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets.

To comply with a voluntary standard established in 1991, hand-held hair dryers must protect against electrocution if they fall into water with the switch in either the “on” or “off” position. These hair dryers come with their own built-in GFCI circuit that immediately shuts off power to the dryer if it contacts water. Older dryers only offer protection when the hair dryer switch is set to “off”; such hair dryers may still be sold today because the new standard is voluntary.

If you have a hair dryer that doesn’t offer protection against shock whether turned on or off, replace it with one that does. And whether your hair dryer has a built-in GFCI or not, don’t let it come into contact with water!

Even with the added protection, the old rule still applies: electricity and water don’t mix.

SAFETY UNDER PRESSURE

A man was electrocuted recently while using an electric pressure washer to wash a truck, prompting the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to reissue a consumer alert. Pressure washers pump water under high pressure through a hose, sometimes mixing the water with a cleaning solution.

Pressure washers may be used to wash farm equipment, motor vehicles, outdoor power equipment, porches, or houses.

The power cord, washer, and user are often in contact with water when the pressure washer is in use. This can be a deadly combination if the power cord connections become wet, an internal short exists, or especially if the machine is not properly grounded. At least 13 such fatalities have been reported; in one incident, a 3-year-old boy was killed when he contacted a pressure washer being used by his father.

To stay safe when using a pressure washer:

- Never defeat a proper ground connection! Don’t use adapter plugs to connect the three-wire plug to a two-prong household receptacle without properly grounding the adapter plug.

- Even when the machine is in good mechanical condition and properly grounded, care must be taken to avoid hazardous conditions. For example, power cord connections should never be allowed to lie in water.

- The National Electrical Code requires that pressure washers be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). The Underwriters Laboratories (UL) is in the process of adding a new provision to voluntary standards that will require that most pressure washers be equipped with built-in GFCIs. However, it may be several years before all pressure washers subject to the UL revisions are available with GFCIs.

- If you’re using an electric pressure washer without a built-in GFCI, then use a GFCI outlet or GFCI-protected circuit. If none of the available circuits is protected by a GFCI, use a portable GFCI, available at many home and hardware stores. Be sure to test the GFCI before using the pressure washer.

- If you must use an extension cord, use a heavy duty, three-wire, properly grounded cord, and keep the power cord connection out of any standing water. Keep the connection as far away as possible from the item being washed and away from any water runoff.

- Wear rubber-soled footwear that provides some insulation when operating the pressure washer.

A NEW SAFETY DEVICE: AFCI

Problems in home wiring, like arcing and sparking, are associated with more than 40,000 home fires that claim over 350 lives and injure 1,400 victims annually. Ordinary household fuses and circuit breakers do not respond to early arcing and sparking conditions; by the time a fuse or circuit breaker opens a circuit under these conditions, a fire may already have begun.

AFCIs are designed to prevent fires, while GFCIs protect against shock.

But a new electrical safety device for homes called an arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) can help prevent fires resulting from these unsafe home wiring conditions. An AFCI will detect the problem quickly and break the circuit to keep fires from starting.

AFCIs should not be confused with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). While both are important safety devices, they have different functions. AFCIs are designed to prevent fires, while GFCIs protect against shock. Combination AFCI/ GFCI devices will become available soon.

AFCIs can be installed in any 15 or 20-ampere branch circuit in homes today and are currently available as circuit breakers with built-in AFCI features. In the near future, other types of devices with AFCI protection will be available.

You may want to consider adding AFCI protection for both new and existing homes. Older homes with ordinary circuit breakers especially may benefit from the added protection against the arcing faults that can occur in aging wiring systems.

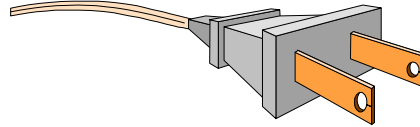
For more information about AFCIs, contact an electrical supply store, an electrician, or the manufacturer of the circuit breakers already installed in your home. Sometimes these components can be replaced with AFCIs in the existing electrical panel box.

Be sure to have a qualified electrician install AFCIs. DO NOT try to do this yourself. The installation involves working within electrical panel boxes that are usually electrically live, even with the main circuit breakers turned off.

May Is Electrical Safety Month

Don'ts...

DON'T use extension cords as permanent substitute for inadequate house wiring.



DON'T use extension cords that are worn or damaged and don't attach extension cords to

the wall with nails or staples.

DON'T put extension cords under rugs where they might be walked on; don't rest anything on an extension cord.

DON'T overload cords with too many appliances.

DON'T touch any appliance that has emitted an electrical shock until the appliance has been unplugged.

DON'T place electrical appliances where they might come in contact with water. Never reach into water for a plugged-in appliance. Turn off power, then unplug it.

DON'T place an appliance cord where it might touch a hot surface.

Do's...

DO use extension cords only on a temporary basis.

DO put safety covers on unused receptacle outlets and extension cords

DO unplug an appliance and call an electrician if the receptacle faceplate feels hot or if there is sparking, smoke, or odor coming from the outlet, plug or appliance.

DO examine appliance and extension cords regularly for signs of wear and tear or damage to insulation.

DO unplug all nonessential electrical appliances when not in use.

DO test GFCIs monthly according to manufacturer's instructions to determine that they are working properly.

**In Observance of
Memorial Day
We Will Be Closed
May 27, 2002**



**Happy Mother's Day!
May 12th**



LOOK OUT ABOVE!

You've heard it before: be careful when using any ladder, especially a metal ladder, around power lines. But it pays to be reminded. If you can, replace metal ladders with wood or fiberglass if you're going to use it anywhere near a power line or electricity source. If you must use a metal ladder, here are a few additional cautions to keep in mind:

- Metal ladders shift position. Wind, uneven ground or reaching to the side while on the ladder can cause the ladder—and the person on it—to contact an overhead wire.

- Never use metal ladders when handling an improperly grounded power tool or contacting an electrical source, such as a light socket.

- Metal stepladders and extension ladders meeting Underwriters Laboratories and American National Standards Institute voluntary standards have labels warning about this hazard. The labels typically state with words and graphic: "Danger! Metal conducts electricity! Keep ladder away from power lines and live electrical wires."

- Carefully check the location of all overhead wires before using a ladder, especially where the lines connect to the house. Any power line (including the line running from the street to your house) can permit electricity to flow into a piece of metal or other object, such as a wet tree branch, that touches it.

- Powerlines and phone lines often appear similar. Assume that all overhead wires carry electricity. Some overhead lines are coated to extend the life of the line. The coating is not intended to protect against electrocution.

- Lower the ladder when carrying or moving it, to avoid touching an overhead wire. Since long ladders can be unwieldy, have someone help carry and set it up.

- Never work on a windy day when a gust of wind can cause the ladder to shift and touch an overhead wire.

- Never place a ladder where it could slide into an overhead line. Make sure the distance to the nearest overhead line is at least twice the length of the ladder.

- Place the ladder's feet on solid, level ground before climbing it. When the ground is not level or is soft, put a flat piece of wood under one or both feet of the ladder to provide a solid, level base. If possible, tie off the ladder to prevent it from moving.

- If the ladder should start to fall into an overhead line, let it go. Never try to move it. Do not leave the ladder unattended. Have someone call your cooperative and report the problem, and make sure the electricity to the line is off before you touch the ladder.

- If someone is holding the ladder when it contacts the overhead line, never try to pull them away with your hands. Use something that does not conduct electricity, such as a long piece of dry wood or rope, to push or pull them loose.



Leave Microwave Repairs to the Pros



Each year, on average, four people die from electrocution while trying to repair their microwave ovens. Microwave ovens use high voltage, which makes it particularly hazardous to remove the cover and touch electrical parts. Even when the oven is unplugged, the possibility of serious shock exists if certain internal devices fail.

Have a professional repair your microwave oven; electrical appliances can be hazardous if consumers expose live electrical parts.

Standby Generator Safety

Double throw switch essential

If you keep a standby generator for emergencies, you must use an appropriate double throw transfer switch to prevent electricity from flowing from your generator back out onto utility power lines during an outage and electrocuting line workers trying to restore power. When regular electric service has been restored, a double throw switch can also prevent power from flowing back in and destroying the generator. Use of these types of transfer switches is a requirement for the National Electrical Code.

If you use a standby generator and have questions about using a double throw switch, please call your co-op for assistance.

Who's on First?

When your power goes out because of a storm, restoring electrical power is not as easy as throwing a switch. Damage caused by wind, ice or snow storms usually occurs at several points in the distribution system. The idea is to get the power back on for everyone in the most efficient manner.

When a widespread outage occurs, the first location your local electric cooperative repair crews check is the substation.

Crews then work their way out on the main distribution line, restoring service to the main feeder lines, then lines serving groups of homes and finally individual consumers.

Working from substation to homes result in faster repairs for the most people. Otherwise individual homes and farms would be "fixed," but there would be no electricity to flow to them.