



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Watts Ahead

## Ninnescah Rural Electric Co-op, Inc.

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### In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Power in Your Hands

Whether we're training new employees or talking to members out and about, we always make it a point to discuss what makes electric co-ops different from other types of utilities. This month, we thought we'd tell you of few of the things we often share.

Ninnescah's decisions are made locally, by trustees who also live right here in our community. Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here — to pay for the electricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We're a co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members.

You may notice that throughout the year, we schedule opportunities for you to attend co-op events, like our annual meeting, so we can hear from you. We want our members to call in with any questions, concerns or suggestions to make this cooperative better able to serve you.

Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you have to say.

Because you're part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our team to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity and first-class service, no matter what the economy — and supply chain issues — throw at us.

Ninnescah Electric is striving to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket. We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services and offerings.

If you want to receive important information from Ninnescah Electric, such as power restoration updates please visit our website, [www.ninnescah.com](http://www.ninnescah.com) and click on the outage tab. You can also stay in the know with our monthly local pages inside *Kansas Country Living*.

Please know that you — the members of Ninnescah Electric — are at the heart of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, friendly service you expect and deserve. While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community. We hope to see or hear from you soon. This co-op was created for you, the members. The power is in your hands.

## Welcome New Members

Cale A Caldwell – Pratt

Robert R Renner – Cunningham

Nicholas &/or Traci Allen – Haviland

Austin S &/or Tsaundra R Robertson – Pratt

Fred L Newby Trust – Pratt

Susan E Newby Trust – Pratt

Jasmin Brock &/or John Berryman –  
Medicine Lodge

Ronald E Pinkerton – Kingman

Rene Guevara – Lewis

City of Hays – Hays

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a heating system tune-up? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment. Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



## A Portable Generator Produces as Much CO as a Parking Lot of Cars

Firing up one fuel-powered portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide (CO) as hundreds of combustion-engine cars, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Using a portable generator in a home, garage or too close to an enclosed area is like starting a parking lot full of cars and letting the CO poison seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in minutes.

### CO Facts

CO is colorless and odorless. Poisoning can happen so quickly that exposed persons may become unconscious before recognizing any symptoms.

### Each year in the U.S.:

- ▶ Approximately 85 individuals die from CO poisoning.
- ▶ Most deaths (81%) occur in residential locations.

African Americans are at greater risk of CO poisoning, accounting for 23% of generator-related CO deaths, nearly double their estimated 13% share of the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census.

### Safety Tips

To use a portable generator safely:

- ▶ Always use a portable generator at least 20 feet away from your home. Apply the 20-foot distance rule to other locations, such as a shed, cabin, camper or trailer.
- ▶ Never operate one inside a home, on a porch or near windows and doors.
- ▶ When shopping for a generator, look for one that gives off reduced emissions.

- ▶ Also look for one that shuts off automatically when high levels of CO are present.
- ▶ Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- ▶ Operate it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool underneath.
- ▶ Ensure CO detectors are installed on every level of your home and near or in bedrooms.
- ▶ Test CO alarms monthly; also track their age. They need to be replaced every seven years.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and movable. A generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator will be able to create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

Besides portable generators, there are also standby generators. The standby versions are attached directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

To prevent feeding power back into the power grid and endangering electric line crews and others, standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Never plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system for the same reason.

For more electrical safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## SAFETY TIP

If you are considering a home solar array, contact your local electric utility early in the process. Your utility will work with installers to ensure proper and safe connection to the power grid.



SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

# Hearing Loss Common in Farming, Can Be Prevented

Effects are cumulative, says K-State safety experts

BY MADDY ROHR, K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

Natural hearing loss comes with age, but exposure to a loud environment — common in agriculture — can cause noise-induced hearing loss, said a pair of Kansas State University safety experts.

Loud machinery, equipment and even animals can play a role in hearing loss related to farming and ranching, said Brad Dirks, associate director of the K-State physician assistance program.

“Exposure hearing loss can be from a one-time experience like a loud concert or using a circular saw without protection,” Dirks said. “Cumulative (hearing loss) can happen over time, like working 40 to 50 years around machinery that push you above the decibel cutoff of 80 to 85.”

For reference, Dirks said people talk at about 60-70 decibels, a movie theater ranges from 75-105 decibels and a motorcycle produces 80-110 decibels.

“How close you are to the noise and how long you’re exposed is very important,” Dirks said.

Tractors with a cab are more muffled compared to those without, and machinery in open spaces will dissipate noise compared to those in enclosed

areas. Tractors normally produce 110-120 decibels.

Animals can also cause exposure hearing loss. Their effect is often overlooked when compared to machinery.

“Pigs squealing can be around 100 decibels, and so prolonged exposure to something like pigs ... in a closed environment can be a problem,” said Tawnie Larson, project coordinator with the Carl and Melinda Helwig Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

She also mentioned the noise from working cattle and calves that are calling back and forth with mothers as being a cause of hearing loss.

Dirks recommends using foam plugs in ears or earmuffs as a preventative measure.

“If you really want to protect your ears, do both; use the foam earplugs and then put the headphones or the earmuffs over and it becomes much more protective in those environments,” he said.

Ear plugs are convenient to keep in pockets and many headphones can be carried around the neck until needed.



“Producers, parents or managers need to think about providing everyone that’s working with them and working on the farm or ranch to have something that can protect their ears,” Larson said.

Youth and babies are also at risk of induced hearing loss and should be provided with appropriate protection at an early age.

“It’s a cumulative thing, so the younger you start with that noise exposure, the more years you have to be exposed to high noise levels,” Dirks added.

Hearing safety is important because it is permanent, and not something that can be fixed.

“And you can get hearing assistive devices, hearing aids that will amplify (sound), but that vocal range and the high range of those sound waves is gone — and once it’s gone, it’s gone. You can’t bring them back,” Dirks said.

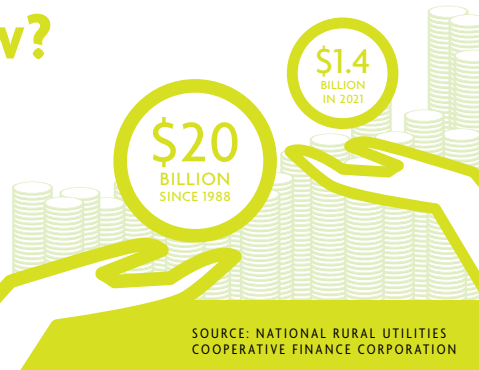
Dirks added that hearing loss can also come from an obstruction in the canal, such as wax or build up. Those can be solved by a doctor.

“(Hearing loss) is preventable,” Larson said. “You can turn it down, walk away, or you can wear hearing protection. (Protection) is pretty easy to find at any hardware store.”

## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$20 billion to members since 1988 — \$1.4 billion in 2021 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.



# HELP THE LINEWORKER RESTORE POWER

Occasionally, severe weather can cause power disruptions. When outages occur, our lineworkers get to work! They restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

Help the lineworker reach the transformer to fix the power outage.

