

P.O. Box 967, Pratt, KS 67124  
620-672-5538 • 800-828-5538  
www.ninnescah.com



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Watts Ahead

## Ninnescah Rural Electric Co-op, Inc.

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**Teresa Miller**  
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**Robert Lamatsch**  
Manager of Operations

**Sarah Ezell**  
Manager of HR/Accounting

### 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 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Reliable Power for Today — and Tomorrow

Ring in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the general manager of Ninnescah Rural Electric, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of our cooperative.

Our team at Ninnescah Rural Electric is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and use new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering — and empowering — our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across our service territory. You may not realize it, but Ninnescah Rural Electric doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc., and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of 29% nuclear, 22% coal, 19% wind, 16% hydro and

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIABILITY

American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford. But that's no longer a guarantee.



Nine states saw rolling blackouts in December 2022 as the **DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY EXCEEDED AVAILABLE SUPPLY.**

Electric cooperatives are working toward meaningful solutions to **ADDRESS THE RELIABILITY CHALLENGES** spreading across the nation. Policymakers should recognize that the electrification of the economy, disorderly retirement and insufficient replacement of existing generation, permitting challenges, supply chain shortages, and the availability of natural gas all **IMPACT THE RELIABILITY OF THE ELECTRIC GRID.**

# Ninnescah Offers 4 SCHOLARSHIPS

Ninnescah Electric's Board of Trustees is awarding four \$1,000 scholarships in 2024 for high school juniors or seniors whose parents or guardians receive electric service from Ninnescah. To apply, please complete the application below and return to Ninnescah Rural Electric Cooperative, 275 N.E. 20th St., P.O. Box 967, Pratt, KS 67124.

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE IN NINNESCAH'S OFFICE BY MONDAY, JAN. 29, 2024.**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Year in School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Names \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all information supplied in this application is accurate and true.

**APPLICANT SIGNATURE**

I hereby grant permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to enter the 2024 Ninnescah Electric Cooperative, Inc. scholarship competition.

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

# Guard Against Utility Service Scams, Fraud and Identity Theft

It is the world we live in today — the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else their service will be shut off, they threaten. This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold. However, utilities typically send initial disconnection notices in writing.

## Utility Scams: How They Get You

Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do not provide any information (including your utility account number) or agree to immediate payment. Instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Utility bills that double the amount typically due may be a utility scam. Utilities are closely regulated and may not have the right to raise prices substantially without previous notice. Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

## Protect Personal Info

When supplying your utility (or any business or person) with sensitive information such as a Social Security number, proof of address or death certificate, do not email the information. Additionally, do not give out sensitive information to anyone who calls you. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.

## At Your Door

The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled “Let ‘Em In,” features the artist’s welcoming plea, “Someone’s knockin’ at the door; Someone’s ringin’ the bell ... Do me a favor; Open the door and let ‘em in,” but that is not great advice these days.

Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform

repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer’s cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house without a pre-approved appointment.

## Scams in General

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) warns that phishing emails and texts may attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use this stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

## Caller ID Can Fib

Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds; do an internet search for the fraud watch network to learn more.

## Scams are Everywhere

Non-utility-related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons when cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password bot scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the “chip in the middle attack,” and scammers get ahold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/serficer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim’s identity.

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers.

## BE AWARE OF SCAM CALLS

Do not provide any information or agree to immediate payment. Instead hang up and call your local electric cooperative.





## Reliable Power for Today — and Tomorrow

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14% gas. Ninnescah has also installed 2 megawatts of our own solar to be used by all our members.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Ninnescah Rural Electric is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumer-members. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Ninnescah save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Kansas and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Ninnescah Rural Electric will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable and safe electricity you expect and deserve — for today and tomorrow.



## Ninnescah Rural Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

The 2024 Ninnescah Rural Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will be held on **MARCH 19, 2024**. Your trustee election ballot will be mailed with your annual meeting information. Please mail it back or drop it by our office. We hope you will attend the annual meeting and take part in the business of the cooperative.

### Annual Meeting Activities:

- ▶ Enjoy food and fellowship.
- ▶ Hear results of the 2024 trustees elections.
- ▶ Listen to highlights of 2023 and what the co-op has in store for 2024.
- ▶ Win a door prize!



## SAFETY TIP

Individuals attempting to steal copper from electrical equipment can lose their lives over what they believe to be “easy” money. If you see suspicious activity, contact your local electric cooperative.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.COM

## Welcome New Members

Ashley Mertens – Harper

Traci Gumpenberger – Mullinville

Keeling Land & Cattle – KS/CO LLC  
– Monett, MO

Vicki Massingill – Salem, AL