

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



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 620-672-5538. 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.

## Reducing the Risk of Wildfires

### May is National Wildfire Awareness Month

Gone are the days when wildfires were primarily confined to the western United States. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought and shifting weather patterns are creating conditions in places that historically experienced few major fires. Today, more than 30 states, including Kansas, face elevated wildfire risk. The reality is clear: Wildfire risk is no longer regional — it is national.

At Ninnescah Electric, protecting our members and the communities we serve is our highest priority. As we recognize National Wildfire Awareness Month in May, we want you to know that wildfire preparedness is not seasonal work for us. It is a year-round commitment embedded in how we operate.

One of the most important ways we work to reduce wildfire threats is through our vegetation management

program. Overgrown trees and power lines are a dangerous combination, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Throughout the year, Ninnescah Electric crews — along with our trusted local contractors — trim and remove vegetation that could come into contact with power lines and other critical infrastructure. This work requires careful planning, coordination with property owners and ongoing inspection. While it may not always be visible, it is an effective tool for preventing fire ignition and maintaining reliable electricity.

Wildfire mitigation also requires thoughtful public policy. Managing electric infrastructure in and around public lands can present unique challenges. That is why we support practical, commonsense solutions such as the Fix Our Forests Act, which

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REMEMBER AND HONOR  
**MEMORIAL DAY**  
Our office will be closed, Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

## WILDFIRE ALERTS AND WARNINGS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Understanding alerts can help you know when to prepare and when conditions may become dangerous.

### FIRE WEATHER ALERTS

#### RED FLAG WARNING:

Critical fire weather conditions are happening or about to happen.

#### FIRE WEATHER WATCH:

Conditions are dry, favorable for critical fire weather and could become dangerous.

### NATIONAL WILDFIRE RISK LEVELS



**LOW (GREEN):** Fire starts are unlikely.

**MODERATE (BLUE):** Some wildfires may occur.

**HIGH (YELLOW):** Wildfires are likely.

**VERY HIGH (ORANGE):** Fires start easily and spread quickly, and are difficult to control.

**EXTREME (RED):** Fires start and spread rapidly. No outdoor burning should take place.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## Reducing the Risk of Wildfires

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would streamline the ability of electric cooperatives and other utilities to maintain power lines on federal lands and reduce hazardous “fuel” buildup. Policies that promote responsible land management are an essential part of a comprehensive wildfire prevention strategy.

Through membership in Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., Kansas electric co-ops had a seat at the table of the Governor’s Wildfire Task Force. The task force was created in the summer of 2022 to study, better prevent, respond to and recover from wildfires. The task force has provided an opportunity for state agencies, first responders, community leaders and utilities across the state to expand collaboration in mitigating wildfire threats.

With federal funds made available through the U.S. Department of Energy State Energy Program, KEC, as a sub-grantee of those funds, has coordinated its member co-ops’ efforts to harden their fire mitigation planning, mitigate potential future threats to the grid, and leverage resources across multiple electric co-ops.

While we are committed to doing

our part, wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. There are important steps each of us can take to protect our homes and neighborhoods.

Properly extinguish fires by dousing them with water, stirring the ashes and ensuring they are cool to the touch before leaving the area. Avoid outdoor burning on windy or excessively dry days. Maintain a defensible space around your home by clearing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable debris. Use lawn equipment carefully, particularly during hot conditions, and always check local regulations for burn bans or restrictions.

Of course, as much as we work to prevent wildfires, nobody can outsmart Mother Nature, and we cannot guarantee 100% prevention. Wildfires are becoming more complex and more widespread, but through proactive system management, sound policy and community partnership, we can reduce risks and strengthen resilience.

At Ninnescah Electric, we take this responsibility seriously. Our members depend on us not only for reliable power, but for leadership in safeguarding the communities we call home.

### SAFETY TIP

When planning a controlled burn, stay far away from power poles and overhead lines. Even a well managed fire can damage a pole, sometimes from the inside out, creating serious electrical hazards. Keep suppression tools such as a shovel, water source or fire extinguisher nearby. Never burn during high winds or when wildfire warnings are in effect.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

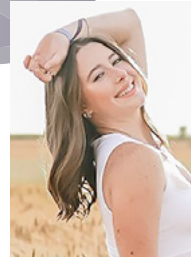
As temperatures start to rise, many homeowners focus on staying cool. Don’t forget about the small gaps around windows and doors. Tiny cracks and worn weatherstripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. This forces your air conditioner to work harder than necessary and increases energy costs. Take a few minutes to check for drafts, replace weatherstripping and seal leaks. A tighter home keeps you more comfortable and helps manage energy use. SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV

# Ninnescah Awards Scholarship Recipients

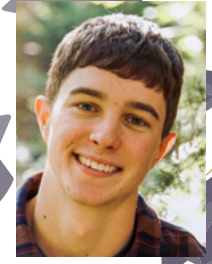
The 2026 Ninnescah Rural Electric Scholarship contest was held in February. Contestants were interviewed by a panel of three judges. We had eight high school seniors participate in the contest.

The winners of \$1,000 our scholarship are **WILEY ATTEBERRY**, Skyline; **CLAIRE CUNNINGHAM**, Medicine Lodge; **JACE FRAZIER**, Kiowa County; and **CLAYTON FREEMAN**, Skyline. **REAGAN BONNER**, St. John, and **HAYDEN RIFFEY**, Pratt, were recipients of a \$500 scholarship. Winners may use the scholarship at the college or technical school of their choice.

Next year's scholarship will be open to seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Ninnescah Electric.



Claire Cunningham



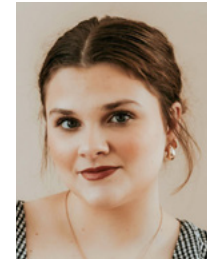
Jace Frazier



Clayton Freeman



Reagan Bonner



Hayden Riffey

(Not pictured Wiley Atteberry)

Please contact our office for information about next year's scholarships at 620-672-5538.

# Annual Meeting Highlights

Ninnescah held its 88th annual meeting on March 17, 2026, at the Pratt Municipal Building. Members enjoyed a wonderful meal served by Fence Post of Harper.

This year's guest speakers were Kevin Noblet, executive vice president and CEO, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, and Lee Tafanelli, CEO, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

Thank you to all who attended; we hope to see you again next year!

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESULTS

**LORI R. JONES**, Lake City; **COREY KOETT**, Belpre; and **EDWIN L. LENKNER**, Coats; were elected to the board of trustees at our annual meeting.



Lori R. Jones



Corey Koett



Edwin L. Lenkner



Members enjoyed a wonderful meal served by Fence Post of Harper at Ninnescah's annual meeting on March 17.



Ninnescah employees provide an electrical safety demonstration for members.

# Prevent Summer Interruptions

## The Advantages of Replacing an Outdated HVAC System Now

With summer heat just around the corner, spring can be a perfect time to prepare for rising temperatures. An outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, for example, may not be up for the task of keeping a home cool as temperatures gradually rise throughout the summer.

Homeowners can pay more in the long term as a gradual decline in efficiency and more frequent repairs quickly add up. In addition to savings over time, there are multiple reasons to replace an aging system this spring.

In a recent survey, Carrier found more than one-quarter (26%) of homeowners don't know the age of their HVAC system, and a slight majority (54%) don't know the average lifespan of one. Those knowledge gaps can result in missed opportunities for long-term savings.

### AGING SYSTEMS CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT

Many homeowners postpone purchasing a new HVAC system until their existing system fails or they find their aging system is struggling to maintain a consistent temperature. Often, upfront costs deter homeowners from purchasing a new system; however, 8 in 10 homeowners would consider a new heating and cooling system if it paid for itself in energy savings within 5-10 years. With a new energy-efficient system, those savings are possible.

### A NEW HVAC SYSTEM IS A CRITICAL HOME INVESTMENT

Modern heating and cooling systems have uses beyond heating and cooling. They can improve indoor air quality by balancing humidity levels, reducing drafts, and maintaining a consistent climate across multiple rooms and stories. They also use less energy and run more quietly than older systems, making a home quieter and more cost-effective.

### HVAC BASICS MANY HOMEOWNERS MISS

HVAC units often go unseen, yet a home's comfort depends on them running consistently. It's critical that homeowners schedule annual maintenance appointments to ensure their system is running as it should and they're aware of when it may be time to replace.

While it may seem more cost-effective to stick with an outdated system for one more season, an old

system could prolong issues and ultimately cost homeowners more in repairs.

Spring is an ideal time to invest in a new HVAC system, as contractors are generally more available to install it and homeowners can get ahead of the summer heat, ensuring they'll stay cool all season long.

### SIGNS IT'S TIME TO REPLACE

Red flags that indicate it may be time to replace your HVAC system include:

- ▶ It's more than 10-15 years old.
- ▶ Repairs are becoming more frequent or more expensive.
- ▶ Energy bills are rising even though your usage hasn't changed.
- ▶ Hot and cold spots are becoming more common, or temperatures vary from room to room.
- ▶ It struggles to reach or maintain your set temperature.
- ▶ It runs constantly, cycles on and off more than usual, or no longer cools as efficiently as it once did.

Many companies offer specials during the spring and fall months. A new HVAC system means more than just cool temps this summer; it means added home value, cleaner air and peace of mind.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKLIST — ROOM BY ROOM

Check This Month to Keep Your Home and Family Safe

### KITCHEN

- ▶ Clean refrigerator coils to allow airflow.
- ▶ Store and use appliances away from the sink.
- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.

### BEDROOM

- ▶ Place and test smoke and CO detectors on every level and near sleeping areas.
- ▶ Keep cords out from under rugs or furniture.
- ▶ Unplug devices and chargers when not in use.
- ▶ Ensure lightbulbs are the correct wattage.
- ▶ Plug window AC units into a dedicated circuit.

### BASEMENT

- ▶ Ensure washer and dryer are ventilated. Remove dryer lint after each use.
- ▶ Set water heater to 120 F or lower.
- ▶ Have furnace inspected and confirm proper ventilation.

### BATHROOM

- ▶ Keep appliances away from water (sink, toilet, tub, shower).
- ▶ Unplug appliances when not in use.
- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.

### LIVING ROOM

- ▶ Use safety caps on unused outlets, especially if children or pets are present.
- ▶ Ensure electronics have space for airflow.
- ▶ Replace cracked light switches or outlet covers.
- ▶ Avoid overloading outlets, power strips and surge protectors.

### GARAGE

- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.
- ▶ Inspect cords for cracks or damage.
- ▶ Unplug tools and appliances when not in use.
- ▶ Place garage refrigerators/freezers on dedicated appliance circuits.