

Country News



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- Robert Bledsoe**, vice president
- Terry Tagtmeyer**, secretary/treasurer
- Danny Mills**, asst. secretary/treasurer
- James Lewis**, director
- Jim Michal**, director
- Luanna Naugle**, director
- Dave Ritchey**, director
- Marvin Thaller**, director

Staff

- Tim Power**, general manager
- Chance Briscoe**, office manager
- Ben Orrell**, member services representative
- Larry Shutte**, operations manager
- Paul Norris**, line superintendent



Touchstone Energy®

2010 in Review

BY TIMOTHY J. POWER, GENERAL MANAGER

As the year comes to a close, I thought I would take a moment to let you know how things went this past year at the cooperative and also provide a look into 2011.



Timothy J. Power

K.C. Electric Association experienced a lot of change in 2010. We have changed the way we do some things internally at K.C. Electric, and we continue to look at ways to better serve our members. But the biggest changes at K.C. Electric were in personnel. After many years of stability, 2010 brought major personnel changes, especially in May. These consisted of the following:

- In January, K.C. Electric lost a beloved employee, Neil Vick. All were saddened at his unexpected passing. Neil had been with K.C. Electric for 35 years.
- In April, Marty Shrimp left the cooperative after over 30 years of service.
- May saw the retirement of John Huppert. John worked for K.C. Electric for 46 years with over five as general manager.
- I began my work as General Manager in May.

- Tom Piskorski, the office manager, retired in May with 31 years of service to K.C. Electric.
- The new office manager, Chance Briscoe, was also hired in May.
- Denice Evans, the receptionist at the Hugo office, came on board in May.
- Casey Hyle was hired as an apprentice lineman in May as well. (*WIN Ralph Jolliffe, 1113570006)

Financially speaking, 2010 was a solid year. Sales of electricity were up from 2009 and the cost of power was about as expected. This financial strength is reflected in our strong margins. As part of the cooperative model, these margins are returned to the cooperative members in the form of capital credits. This past month our board of directors approved the distribution of \$1.25 million in capital credits (see the article on page 9 from board President Kevin Penny).

As we look to 2011, we are expecting an interesting year. Since a healthy portion of our power costs comes from various regulations and/or legislative actions, we will be paying close attention to state and national politics and will continue to make sure your voice is heard in any discussion affecting your utility bill.



K.C. Electric Association staff and board would like to wish you a Christmas season filled with joy and happiness and a prosperous new year.

K.C. Electric will be closed

Thursday, December 23 & Monday, January 3.

Merlin Ford, Long-Time Resident of Vona

BY BEN ORRELL, MEMBER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

Merlin Ford readily admits he was raised during the toughest times in America. Born just after World War I, he lived through the crash of '29 and watched as the government came in and killed his family's cows to eliminate the surplus. They were paid \$12 each. He remembers when the Ku Klux Klan was powerful even here on the eastern plains. Merlin was raised in a family with 10 kids. When other families starved and left the area, his family simply couldn't go because there was no way to get 10 kids and two adults into a vehicle.

Out of adversity comes strength, and Merlin is a living example of that. Merlin went to a one-room school south of Vona and after graduation went to California to get a job. Apparently his education was pretty good because he took the civil service examination, passed and was hired to work in the headquarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). World War II brought an end to the CCC camps, and Merlin came home for a bit until he was drafted. Initially he was an infantryman and then cross trained into the military police. He spent most of his time in military service working in German prisoner camps in Texas.

When questioned about working with prisoners, Merlin said that basically they were not that different than he was. They were young and had been drafted to serve their country. He said that he was not allowed to spend time with the prisoners but did anyhow. He liked to play cards with them. He worked his way up to first sergeant while there. One of his fellow soldiers was jealous and was always trying to get him in hot water. The German soldiers watched his back and kept him out of trouble. He got all of his haircuts, dental work and other necessities from the Germans.

In his camp the company commander kept a map of how far the Allies had advanced. One day one of the prisoners who had always been friendly was dark and brooding. When Merlin asked why the long face, the German pointed to the map and said that his hometown had just been taken. (Cheyenne Fertilizer, 104750000)



Merlin Ford has lived in Vona for most of his life and has seen it all.

After the war, Merlin came home. He and his brother, Pat, bought the local Red & White Grocery, which was part of a large chain. In those days, Vona was a busy place

Someone asked Merlin when he was going to remarry. "Heck" he said with a twinkle in his eye, "I have plenty of time. I'm only 86."

with two grocery stores, three gas stations, a bank, a hardware store and much more. Merlin didn't stay in the grocery business long. His dad was the postmaster in Vona and when the elder Ford left that job to become a rural mail carrier, Merlin took the necessary tests, used his veteran's preference and was hired as the new postmaster. That was 1949 and the post office was in a shack up on the hill. In 1959, Merlin moved the post office to its current location on First Avenue. He retired in 1985.

Merlin married and had five children, three boys and twin girls. His oldest son was killed in 1966, and his wife died in 1978. He has 11 grandchildren. In 1988, Merlin remarried and his new wife brought a child into the marriage. Her child brought two more grandchildren into the family picture. His second wife died in 2007.

Merlin's second wife had worked for him as a clerk and then moved on to become a postmaster. He is proud that two of the people who worked for him as clerks moved on up to become postmasters. He said he made a concerted effort to help them learn as he studied so they could have a good

chance of advancement. It worked.

I asked Merlin what was the major catalyst for change in the Vona area during his 86 years there. "Two things," he said. "In 1933 a full block of the town burned down. No one had insurance in those days and they simply left to start again elsewhere." The second thing was the large number of people from Kansas who moved into the area. With them came the wheat business and modern farming practices, and the old farming methods quickly became a thing of the past.

Merlin has been a pillar in his community for many years. He has served on committees and planning commissions. He was in the Lions Club from the time a chapter opened in Vona until it folded a few years ago. He is a lifetime member of the American Legion. He started decorating the graves of veterans when there were only 11 and continues now that there are 44.

Merlin recently received an honor. He was selected to be one of the World War II veterans to go back to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II memorial and much more. This is because of a program called Honor Flight Network. He and a number of other Colorado veterans went to represent Colorado. He was referred to as the "pup" by the other veterans because he is so healthy and full of vim and vigor. You can see by the smile on his face that he had a really good time. The Honor Flight Network is a wonderful program. If you would like more information on it, type "Honor Flight Northern Colorado" in a search engine.

As we talked, Merlin briefly relayed personal tragedies in his life and talked about tough times, but the time spent with him was not dominated by those. No, Merlin lives each day to the fullest. He is not living in the past. He is enjoying every day and looking forward to the next adventure. A friend of Merlin's married at 90 years of age, and he and his new wife, traveled all over the United States. Someone asked Merlin when he was going to remarry. "Heck" he said with a twinkle in his eye, "I have plenty of time. I'm only 86."

SHOW ME THE MONEY

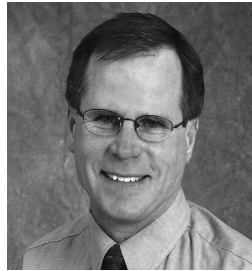
BY KEVIN PENNY, BOARD PRESIDENT

K.C. Electric Association is set apart from many business structures in that it is a cooperative, owned by its members. Its margins are allocated yearly to the members' capital credit accounts in proportion to the amount of electricity they used.

Generally in March, members receive a card from K.C.

showing the amount of capital credits allocated to the member for that year and the total amount that remains unpaid. These margins are retained by the association for a period of time to help strengthen its financial position. Although members receive an indirect benefit by the use of the retained margins — as K.C. Electric has to borrow less money — the biggest benefit is when the association pays back the capital credits and “shows you the money”.

Annually, the board of directors makes a determination on the amount of capital credits, if any, that it may retire while



Kevin Penny

ensuring the financial integrity of the cooperative. This year, the board decided to retire \$1.25 million. This amount is in addition to the retirements made to the beneficiaries of deceased patrons. These retirements will be made on a first-in, first-out basis over a period of time. If a member's capital credit amount is \$20 or

more, a capital credit check should arrive in December. If a member's capital credit amount for the period to be paid is under \$20, then the retirement amount will continue to accrue each year until it reaches \$20. (Cristi Brachtenbach, 303100009)

Should members have any questions, please contact someone on the board of directors or in the office of K.C. Electric. The association is happy to be able to return this amount of capital credit to its members and continue to show the benefits of being a part of this cooperative.

Double-Throw Switches Protect Others

As fall moves into winter, with all of its snow and ice, many of you are making sure your portable generator is ready in case the power goes out. Your electric co-op encourages you to make sure you also have a double-throw transfer switch wired between the generator and the co-op's power. Not doing so could kill or injure any linemen working to restore your power.

Without a double-throw switch, the electricity generated by your portable unit could feed back into your electric co-op's system. An electrical worker thinking he was working on a dead line would, however, be working on a live line. That difference could be fatal for him.

In 2011, K.C. Electric will offer a \$100 rebate to K.C. members who install an approved double-throw switch. Call member services for details.

Cool Your Winter Energy Bill

You've budgeted for holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation — and with money tight, that doesn't leave much room for home energy efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks:

- **Drape delivery:** Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.
- **Got tape?** Though not as durable as foam, rubber, or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash; door frames; attic hatches; and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.
- **Free vents:** Your heating, ventilating and air-conditioning system will have to work twice as hard if your air registers and vents are blocked by rugs, furniture, or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

- **Garage drain:** Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.
- **Cool food:** Don't make your fridge work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34 degrees; and 37 degrees; leave the freezer between 0° and 5 degrees. Keep the freezer full — frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator. (School District RE-5, 428500000)
- **Hot Savings:** Heating water accounts for 12 percent of your home's energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120 degrees. For households with only one or two members, 115 degrees works.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching television or using lights, computers and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night. Find more ways to save at www.TogetherWeSave.com.



SEAL YOUR HOME

Caulk is cheap. Using it on your home can make a big difference in your heating costs.

To quickly make the most difference, caulk inside along baseboards, around windows and around plumbing penetrations that come through walls beneath all sinks. Caulk electrical wire penetrations at the top of interior walls.

Outside, caulk around all penetrations, including telephone, electrical, cable, gas, water spigots and dryer vents.

In the basement, seal the sill and band joist with durable caulking or foam sealant and caulk those windows, also.

When you're done, you'll have a cozier, warmer home this winter.

YOUR NEIGHBOR'S KITCHEN

Pumpkin Banana Bread

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup cooking oil
- 4 eggs
- 3 1/3 cups white, whole wheat flour or all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon apple pie spice (or mix together 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon, 3/4 teaspoon nutmeg and 1/2 teaspoon ginger)
- 2/3 cup apple cider or water
- 1 15-ounce can pumpkin
- 1 medium ripe banana mashed
- 1 6-ounce package dried cranberries (optional)

Grease bottoms and 1/2 inch up sides of four 7 1/2- by 3 1/2- by 2-inch or two 9- by 5- by 3-inch loaf pans and set aside.

In a very large mixing bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed beat sugars and oil. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each. Set aside. In a mixing bowl combine flour, soda, salt and pie spice. Alternately add dry mixture and cider or water to sugar mixture, beating on low speed after each addition just until combined. Beat in pumpkin and banana. Stir in cranberries. Spoon batter into pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. If necessary, cover with foil last 15 minutes. Cool 10 minutes on wire rack.

Wrap and store overnight before slicing. (Earl Chadderton, 1146300001)

Make four mini loaves for snacking and gift giving or two larger loaves for holiday dinner. Prep time is 25 minutes.

You can substitute chopped nuts for the cranberries.

ETHEL FERRIS, HASWELL

Old-Fashioned Gingersnaps

- 3/4 cup butter (or margarine)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 cups flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- Additional sugar

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar, add egg and molasses and beat well. Stir together dry ingredients except additional sugar. Add to creamed mixture. Mix well. Chill the dough. Roll into 1 1/4-inch balls and dip in sugar. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 375 degrees for about 10 minutes or until set and surface cracks. Cool on rack. Makes about 4 dozen.

DOROTHY LANDRY, COLORADO SPRINGS

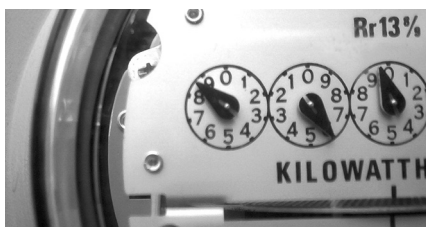
CLAIM YOUR CREDIT ON YOUR BILL

Each month, K.C. Electric offers consumers a chance to earn a \$10 credit on their next electric bill. If you recognize your 10-digit account number in this magazine, call 719-743-2431 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

In October, Chad Crisp of Flagler and the Lutheran

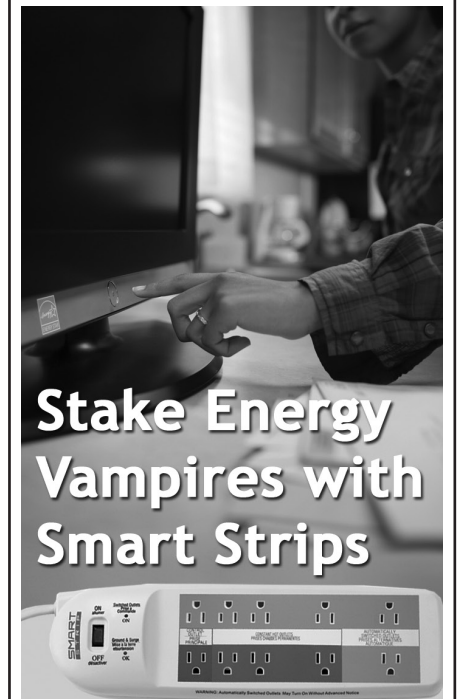
Church in Arriba called to claim their savings. Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* and pick up the phone. That's all the energy you'll need to claim your energy bucks.

You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine (check the date on the front cover).



IRRIGATION METER READING


Irrigation meters will be read on:
December 29-30
January 31





Stake Energy Vampires with Smart Strips

In an average home, 5 percent to 8 percent of electric use stems from "energy vampires"— devices that use power even when turned off. Smart power strips help you unplug energy-draining devices when not in use easily.

There are typically three different types of outlets on a smart strip:

 The blue outlet serves as a control plug (ideal for a TV or computer).

 Devices plugged into red outlets stay on—electricity to these receptacles never cuts off, making them perfect for satellite boxes and other items that need constant power.

 Remaining outlets, often green or neutral in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet. Turning off a device plugged into the blue outlet cuts power to items connected to these outlets.

Smart strips are available online or at specialty electronic retailers and generally cost \$20 or more depending on their size.

Source: Cooperative Research Network, Bits Ltd.