

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

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1-877-783-3221

Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Chairman

Gordon McClureJasper

Vice Chairman

Justin Parcel..... Clark

Secretary/Treasurer

Ted Helmink Cumberland

Directors

Ava LemmonCrawford
Brandon Graves Richland
Kurt HolscherCrawford
Gilbert Garbe Effingham
Scott Weiss.....Lawrence
Dan Strine Wabash
Dave Sheppard.....Jasper
Ron Viehman.....Lawrence

General Manager

Tamara Phillips



2023 Annual Meeting of Members

Norris Electric Cooperative held their 85th annual meeting of members on Saturday, Feb. 25 at Newton Community High School.

Board President Gordon McClure welcomed members and thanked them for their interest in their coop. McClure revisited the 10-year work plan and reviewed the progress that has been made. The hardest decision of the work plan was a new office facility. Construction began last fall and should be finished in early June. McClure also voiced concerns of the energy industry and assured members Norris is dedicated to seeing the co-op remain financially sound, and that it provides fair electric rates and delivers safe and reliable electricity to co-op members.

Norris Electric Manager Tamara Phillips reported 54 miles of line was rebuilt in 2022, which will help reduce and/or prevent outages. Rolling blackouts were introduced last year due to the reduction in baseload power plants across the country. The probability of power shortages increasing may become a reality. Phillips emphasized the work NEC has done to improve service, one being a new substation in the Hidalgo area. From rebuilding transmission lines to active forestry and vegetation management, NEC is working hard to continue its great service to its members. This also includes the release of \$1.2 million in the form of capital credits to members who had service in 1985. Phillips asked the members to join us as we work to improve Norris Electric Cooperative, because we know we are better if we all work together.



Representative Adam Niemerg spoke on energy issues and Craig Sondgeroth, president/CEO of AIEC, enlightened members on the duties of the AIEC and how they offer support for cooperatives.

During the meeting, two future leaders were introduced. The two guest speakers were Jackson Parcel and Caitlyn Drury, who both represented the co-op in June 2022 on the annual Youth to Washington tour. Drury and Parcel spent a week in Washington, D.C., seeing monuments, speaking with legislators and learning more about the cooperative business model. They both reflected on their time in D.C. and thanked the members for their support.

After 29 years of service as a board director, Dean Dietrich was presented with a plaque for his service to the co-op as he retires.

Continued on 18B ►

Annual Meeting continued from 18A

President McClure explained the election process for the board of directors. This year petitions were received by two of the incumbents and one person applying for the open seat in Richland County. Since there were no contested seats for the positions on the board, the cooperative did not send ballots to the members. The three directors to be seated this year are Dan Strine, Wabash County; Ron Viehman, Lawrence County; and Brandon Graves, Richland County. McClure introduced the rest of the board: Scott Weis, Lawrence County; Gilbert Garbe, Effingham County; Ava Lemmon, Crawford County; Gordon McClure, Jasper County; Kurt Holscher, Crawford County; Dave Sheppard, Jasper County; Justin Parcel, Clark County; and Ted Helmink, Cumberland County. Aaron Leonard, general counsel for Norris Electric, was also introduced.

During the meeting, a drawing was held for four \$500 scholarships for



high school students in attendance. The scholarship winners were Jocelyn Sweitzer, Martinsville High School; Aaron Davis, Dieterich High School; Allison Kirts, Newton High School; and Hallie Scott, Red Hill High School.

The meeting was adjourned, prizes were awarded, and a delicious meal was served by Niemerg's of Effingham.

Play it safe around power lines

Digging holes, climbing trees, flying kites — outdoor play often creates beautiful childhood memories. Before hitting the great outdoors, discuss electrical safety with your children.

Flying fun

While flying kites, model airplanes, remote-controlled flying toys and drones, stay in large, open areas (such as parks or fields), far away from power lines. If an item gets caught in a power line, teach children to never try to retrieve it. Instead, an adult should call their electric utility for help.

General outdoor safety tips

Other important safety guidelines for kids and adults alike include:

- Never throw objects at power lines.
- Stay far away from downed, damaged or low-hanging power lines. An adult should call 911 to report a downed or damaged line.
- Be cautious after a severe storm that caused a power outage. Downed power lines could be hidden under water, snow or storm debris. Wait to go outside until power has been restored.

- Do not climb, sit or play on padmount transformers (green boxes).

- Do not climb trees that have overhead power lines near or running through them.

Poolside

When spending time by the pool, look overhead when using pool skimmers or other long objects to be sure you are not getting close to an overhead power line. If you are swimming and feel a prickly or tingling sensation, do not stay in the pool. There could be a stray electric current from a downed power line or a damaged electrical device. Also, never play in a flooded street or ditch; a downed power line could be hidden by the water and fallen debris.

Prevention is key

Electric shock and injuries are often preventable. Empower your family with electrical safety knowledge to avoid preventable electric injuries. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Lineworker Appreciation Day April 10

Electric lineworkers provide an essential service: They install and maintain overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out.

Lineworkers work with high-voltage electricity, often at great heights, in all kinds of weather conditions. Maintaining the power grid is physically demanding. To become proficient, most lineworkers go through a technical training program and first learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned lineworkers who have earned journeyman status.

Electric power line installers and repairers held approximately 126,600 jobs in 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Nearly half of these employees worked for electric power generation, transmission and distribution utilities.

Safety comes first

Lineworkers spend numerous hours in safety training each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations.

Protective clothing is required to shield lineworkers since they work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds.

According to the U.S. BLS, electric power line installers and repairers typically:

- Install, maintain or repair the power lines that move electricity.
- Identify defective devices, voltage regulators, transformers and switches.
- Inspect and test power lines and auxiliary equipment.
- String (install) power lines between poles, towers and buildings.
- Climb poles and transmission towers and use truck-mounted buckets to access equipment.

- Operate power equipment when installing and repairing poles, towers and lines.
- Know and implement safety standards and procedures.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work safely and efficiently to restore service. We salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.

WHAT DOES A LINEWORKER DO?

On any given day or night, in all kinds of weather conditions, lineworkers install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems.

We entrust our lineworkers with your safety, so they hold a very important job. We also rely on their expertise to power our world.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

Lineworkers must commit to safety above all else for the benefit of those they serve (you!), fellow crew members and themselves. They spend thousands of hours in safety trainings each year and must learn and apply numerous safety regulations.

THEY ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED TO:

- Climb poles to service power lines in areas inaccessible by trucks.
- Stand in an elevated bucket to assess and repair overhead lines.
- Install poles, overhead lines and other equipment.
- Work on both energized and deenergized lines.
- Install and service underground lines.

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Work Zone Awareness Week sheds light on safety

National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 17-21, 2023, is a good time to learn more about work zone safety; however, work zone safety should be observed 365 days a year to save lives.

Cars or trucks that speed through a work zone not only endanger workers on the ground. Driving too fast or too close to a work truck can also put an elevated worker in danger by causing their raised bucket to move or sway.

Streets and highways are lined with power poles and electrical equipment, and narrow roadways often require crews like ours to place their equipment in or near traffic lanes. Be alert to utility and other work zone crews for their safety and yours. Besides our crews, you might encounter road workers, other utility crews, tree trimmers or first responders working in or on the side of the road.

According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, 774 fatal crashes and 857 deaths occurred in work zone crashes in 2020 (at the writing of this article, data was not available for 2021). Many other work zone crashes result in injuries. In 2020, 102,000 work zone crashes occurred.

To help keep roadside crews safe:

- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment and workers.
- Be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so allow time for unexpected setbacks.
- Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- Use your headlights at dusk and during inclement weather.
- Minimize distractions. Avoid activities such as texting, operating a radio, applying makeup and eating.

Remember, slow down when approaching a work zone and move over for first responders and work crews. Do your part to help everyone return home safely at the end of the day.



It's not a suggestion. It's the law.

Life is fast paced, but speeding or multitasking in a work zone is not worth losing your life or taking someone else's.

To help save lives and reduce injuries, follow orange sign directives every time you approach a work zone.

2020 Work Zone Statistics*

Crashes and Injuries



Estimated total crashes
102,000



Estimated injuries
44,000

Fatalities



857
Total fatalities



244 Fatalities involving
commercial motor vehicles

Pedestrian Fatalities in Work Zones



105 Pedestrians
(non-workers)



51 Pedestrian workers

Do your part to help everyone return home safely. The orange sign is not meant for everyone else; it is meant for everyone.



*most recent data available

Sources: National Work Zone Awareness Week (nwzaw.org), National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, American Traffic Safety Services Association

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