



PIONEER ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, call 888-551-4140. After-hours calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to standby personnel.

Pioneer Electric Welcomes Two New Cooperative Employees

To serve the needs of our members, Pioneer Electric looks to our staff of employees and the skills they bring to the cooperative. We are proud to recognize two new employees ready to serve our communities and members.



**Claudia
Cardenas**
Accountant

Claudia Cardenas joined Pioneer Electric as an accountant in November 2016. The Lakin

native, graduated from West Texas A&M University with a bachelor's in business administration-accounting in 2012 and went on to earn her master of business administration in May 2014.

While not at work, she can be found spending time with her husband and two-year-old daughter, cheering on the University of Kansas Jayhawks, watching soap operas and baking. Family is very important to Claudia. She is the youngest of five siblings and she credits her relationship with her mother as helping make her the person she is today.

"My mother has always been there for me; she is my rock," said Claudia. "She has taught me that sacrifices and hard work will be paid

back, to remember where I came from and to always strive to be the best I can be."

Claudia is excited to bring her skills to the cooperative and is eager to start serving the members of Pioneer Electric.



**Michelle
Brungardt**
*Executive
Assistant*

Since moving to the Ulysses community in 2010, Michelle has been

waiting for an opportunity to serve the members of Pioneer Electric. In December of 2016, her opportunity was finally granted as she was warmly welcomed to the co-op family. She will take up the role as executive assistant at Pioneer Electric.

In her free time, Michelle enjoys being outdoors by camping and working in her yard. She also enjoys crocheting and baking sweet treats for her friends and family.

Family is very important to Michelle and she tries to spend as much time with her three children Nathan (age 26), Mackinzie (age 24) and Kayla (age 16), and three grandchildren, as she can.

Welcome to the Pioneer family, Claudia and Michelle. We are excited to welcome you to the cooperative!

The Cooperative Membership: Why We Should Care

BY DREW WAECHTER

When I first joined the staff of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, one of things that initially struck me as odd was the idea of becoming a member of a utility. What exactly does it mean to be a member of an electric cooperative and why should I care? It truly baffled me. To this naïve twenty-something, the thought of a membership always seemed to invoke the idea of exclusivity. I mean, we become members of clubs, organizations, jelly-of-the-month clubs; not an electric cooperative. However, as I've grown with the cooperative and have met the members, my outlook on what a cooperative is has changed. I've recognized that a membership to our cooperative is vital in ensuring reliable power to all in our service territory.

Pioneer Electric was created by a group of hard-working farmers and community members, not by a single company, looking for a way to help bring power to southwest Kansas. These individuals joined in a movement of rural electrification across America's heartland, hoping to produce a brighter future for those living in sparsely populated areas. It didn't matter the background, profession or how far out a person lived, what mattered was ensuring



Energy Services Representative Kris Leisher shows her appreciation to members during a visit to the Grant County Senior Center. Opportunities like these are just one of the ways members can meet with employees of their cooperative.

a safe and reliable product to all. To accomplish this, the control of the cooperative was placed into the member-owners who used the service. Through democratic control, they worked together to elect a board of trustees to represent their needs, plan for the future and bring forth the needs of the communities. They didn't do this because it benefitted them or was considered a great business maneuver, but because it was the right thing to do.

Today, your co-op is able to empower our communities in new ways. Programs such as Helping Us Give to Society (H.U.G.S.), The Pioneer Electric Area Round-Up, college scholarships, Youth Tour and more have all been made possible due to the feedback from the Pioneer membership and their elected board. Through these programs, we work to achieve the dream of our forefathers and make our communities a better place for all.

So, why should you care about your cooperative? Because in the turbulence of today's world, we could use a bit more of that same spark that helped illuminate our communities years ago. It's the fulfillment of helping our neighbors, the opportunity to pursue our dreams and be a part of something bigger that unifies us as a cooperative. Together, we generate an energy that powers our communities through our service, our contribution and by using our talents to help support a brighter tomorrow.



Community outreach programs, like H.U.G.S, were made possible by the outstanding support of our members.



Being active in your cooperative membership ensures a bright future for the next generation of members.

Keep These Tips For Space Heater Safety In Mind

As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, space heaters are also responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you are planning to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips to keep you, your family and your property safe.

Materials

What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

Placement

While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater placement is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

Special Features

Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shutoff can be a lifesaver. If you



Understanding your space heater can help you stay warm and safe during colder weather. Take the time to look through the manual and safety information included with your heater before plugging it into an outlet.

currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

Cords

You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged in to that wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they don't become a tripping hazard.

Use

Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

Following these tips and making sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions can keep you safe this winter.

Help Us Return Unclaimed Capital Credits

One of the benefits of being a member is patronage capital credits. Patronage capital credits come from margins, or money left over at the end of the year after all operating costs and expenses have been paid. These margins are allocated to each member's capital credit account based on how much electricity the member purchased that year. The allocated margins are retained and used by Pioneer Electric for operating capital. This reduces the amount the Cooperative has to borrow.

Each year the Board of Directors determines if the Cooperative is financially able to pay prior years' capital credits back to the members. When so approved, the cooperative refunds designated prior year's

capital credits to the members who used electricity during the designated years. Pioneer Electric refunds capital credits on a first-in, first-out basis.

Even if you move and are no longer a member of the Cooperative, the capital credits remain in your account. Be sure to update your mailing address with Pioneer Electric if you move so we can send future capital credit checks to the correct address. .

A list of unclaimed capital credits can be found on our website at www.pioneerelectric.coop. If you have any questions in regards to unclaimed capital credit checks, give our office a call at 620-356-1211 or 1-800-794-9302.

Your Connection to Great Local Savings!



No Paperwork. No Sign-up. Just Great Savings From our Local Partners!

Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions, Liberal

- ▶ 40% off retail on hearing aids & free hearing tests

AJ Graphics, Garden City

- ▶ 10% off all products

Bank of Ulysses, Ulysses

- ▶ First box of checks free with new checking account

Corporate East Hotel, Ulysses

- ▶ Any length of stay in a standard room at the rate of \$69

Farm Bureau Financial Services, Ulysses

- ▶ Free insurance consultation

Fort's Cedar View, Ulysses

- ▶ 10% discount on an overnight stay in the Wildflower or Frontier Room

Grant County Bank, Ulysses

- ▶ .10% above APY on 3 year or greater term CD

Grant County Furniture, Ulysses

- ▶ 5% off lowest marked price on items in store

Grant County Senior Center, Ulysses

- ▶ Discounted rates for seniors on various services offered

Hamilton County Museum, Syracuse

- ▶ Free admission

Inner Balance Massage, Ulysses

- ▶ \$5 off an hour long massage

J & M Paint & Decorating Center Inc., Garden City

- ▶ 15% discount on any item in store or special orders

Katie's Goody Shop, Ulysses

- ▶ Lunch special of popcorn chicken and french fries for \$3.50.

Key Office, Garden City

- ▶ For every \$100 spent, Key will donate \$5 to the PEAR Program

Main ARTery Frame Shop, Ulysses

- ▶ 10% off complete framing services, not valid with any other offer

Northrup Theatre, Syracuse

- ▶ \$1 off medium or large special (tub of popcorn and two drinks)

Optical 20/20, Liberal

- ▶ 20% off OTC sunwear

Paper Graphics Inc., Garden City

- ▶ \$25 off graphic design services

Perry's Tire & Supply, Ulysses

- ▶ 10% off alignment on passenger and LT vehicles, 10% off set of 4 passenger and LT tires, does not include labor

Professional Business Systems, PBS Computers, Liberal

- ▶ 10% off labor for new home/personal computer system and repair

Puffy's Pizza, Ulysses

- ▶ Large, single topping pizza for medium pizza price

Revolt Technology Group, Garden City

- ▶ 10% discount on computer services

Seward County Historical Society - Dorothy's House, Land of Oz, Coronado Museum, Liberal

- ▶ One free child admission when accompanied by a paid adult

The Movies, Ulysses

- ▶ Buy a large popcorn and large drink combo for \$5

Ulysses Veterinary Hospital, Ulysses

- ▶ \$40 off pet dental procedures

United Country Real Estate, Ulysses

- ▶ Free use of trailer within 30 mile radius of Ulysses



Additional Deals Online At connections.coop

Lost your card? Drop by our office to pick up a new one! No questions asked!