



1850 W. Oklahoma P.O. Box 368
Ulysses, KS 67880
620-356-1211 or 800-794-9302
www.pioneerelectric.coop

PIONEER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

PIONEER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Mike Brewer
President | Alfred Alexander
Trustee |
| Jeff Moyer
Vice President | Jim Bell
Trustee |
| John Jury
Secretary/Treasurer | Charles Milburn
Trustee |
| Lori Deyoe
Trustee | |
| David Light
Trustee | |

STAFF

- Lindsay Campbell**
Interim CEO
- Chantry Scott**
Interim Assistant CEO and CFO
- Clint Meier**
Vice President of Engineering and Operations
- Anita Wendt**
Vice President of Energy Services
- Alyssa Hammond**
Editor

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.

Southwest Friends of the Arts Receives H.U.G.S. Grant

The Pioneer Electric Helping Us Give To Society (H.U.G.S.) team presented the **SOUTHWEST FRIENDS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY (SWFAS)** with \$5,500 in grants in November 2023. The organization will use the funds to purchase equipment for its technical properties project.

“Purchasing this equipment will allow us to take our shows to other venues that do not have theatrical facilities,” said Janice Hollis, vice president of SWFAS. “This equipment will also be beneficial to our fast-growing children’s productions.”

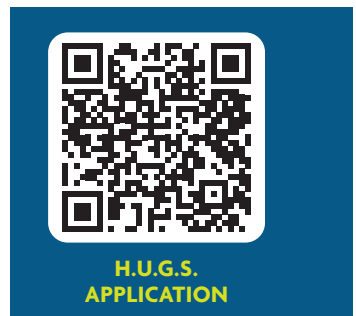
SWFAS plans to purchase a sound board, wireless mic systems, headset mics, two spotlights, a fog machine, lighting system, an enclosed trailer and more. The organization serves a variety of demographics from school-age children to adults.

“It’s great to see a community take an interest in any arts program,” said Anita Wendt, Pioneer’s vice president of energy services. “Purchasing this new equipment will allow Southwest Friends of the Arts to share their love of theater with many more.”



H.U.G.S. team member Anita Wendt (second from left) presents Southwest Friends of the Arts a \$5,500 grant. Pictured from left are: Linda Gooch, Anita Wendt, Jana Crump and Janice Hollis.

H.U.G.S. is funded through recycled materials. Pieces of steel, aluminum or copper taken out of service turned into funds for community-focused projects. As funds become available, Pioneer Electric seeks out projects to fund within its service territory. To be eligible for funds, organizations must meet the guidelines within Pioneer’s H.U.G.S. application.



CO-OP 101: THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Voluntary and Open Membership

As a member of Pioneer Electric, you're a part of something beyond just receiving power and paying a monthly bill. Pioneer conducts business each day with our members in mind — guided by values, mission and the Seven Cooperative Principles.

The Seven Cooperative Principles outline how a cooperative should ideally work. Each principle summarizes the values membership offers and identifies the cooperative as an association developed to meet the needs of the members it serves.

Each principle is a piece to the cooperative puzzle. Studying each provides insight into the cooperative and why it makes some of the decisions it does. Let's examine that first piece: Voluntary and Open Membership.

A cooperative must have an active membership. Without the participation of its members, a co-op cannot succeed. Co-ops ensure participating members by being open to any individual or organization willing to join and accept the responsibilities of membership. In the case of Pioneer Electric members, that means paying a monthly electric bill.

Being open to any entity means that a co-op cannot discriminate against anyone who wishes to use its service. It also means that members have an active say in when they choose to connect, or

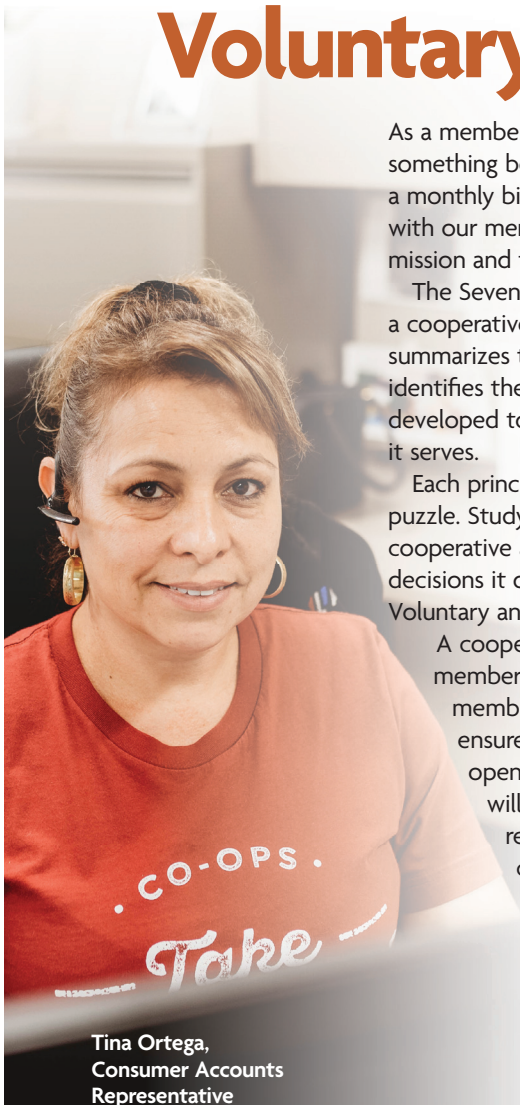
7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Voluntary and Open Membership
- ▶ Democratic Member Control
- ▶ Members' Economic Participation
- ▶ Autonomy and Independence
- ▶ Education, Training and Information
- ▶ Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- ▶ Concern For Community

disconnect their service. It also means that any member of the cooperative can take part in any exclusive programs offered by the co-op.

Pioneer Electric works hard each day to ensure we're living up to the standards we've set out in our mission. We use the cooperative principles to guide us when it comes to making decisions that impact our members and to make certain we're doing our best to provide our members with safe and reliable power.

To learn more about your cooperative and to see how we put the Seven Cooperative Principles to work each day, visit us at www.pioneerelectric.coop or find us on Facebook. Members with questions are welcome to call our office at 620-356-1211 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.).



Tina Ortega,
Consumer Accounts
Representative

Members Have Access to Energy Bill Assistance

The Kansas Department of Children and Families' Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program designed to help eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs. This one-time per year benefit is available to:

- ▶ Adults living at the address personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residences, payable to either the landlord or fuel provider.
- ▶ Those who demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

BENEFIT LEVELS VARY ACCORDING TO:

- ▶ Household income.
- ▶ The number of persons living at the address.
- ▶ Type of dwelling.
- ▶ Type of heating fuel.

Those who meet the outlined qualifications may submit their application online or request a paper application by calling 888-369-4777. Applications must be submitted by KDCF's close of business on **FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024.**

For more information regarding the LIEAP program or Pioneer Electric's bill payment options, scan the QR codes at right.



LIEAP



WAYS TO PAY

Morton County Coalition Brings Hope Centers to Communities

As a resident of Morton County, Economic Director **ALEXIS O'HAIR** noticed a troubling trend. Her community was impacted greatly by the effects of mental health.

From a desire to help those in her community suffering, O'Hair, along with a coalition of community members, came up with idea of providing discreet and confidential access to mental health services through the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988).

The coalition's work has resulted in establishing two active "Hope Centers," located in Elkhart and Richfield, with a third planned for Rolla. The Hope Centers are designed to help achieve four major goals:

- ▶ Provide confidential locations for people to call the hotline at no expense using phones provided at each location.
- ▶ Make resources more accessible to underserved populations.
- ▶ Create a "safe and secure" environment for people who fear judgment or feel alone.
- ▶ Educate the community on the importance of mental health.



A coalition of community members help to coordinate the free services at Hope Centers in Elkhart and Richfield. Posing at the Hope Center in Elkhart are coalition members (from left): Crystal Bashford, extension agent; Alexis O'Hair, Morton county economic director; Kendra Walsh, coalition member; and Mike Horton, rural champion.



Each Hope Center, like this one in Richfield, provides free mental health resources and phones for anyone in need.

"We knew who we wanted to help and what kind of help they are trying to seek," said O'Hair. "We applied for and were awarded a Rural Champion grant from the Office of Rural Prosperity. This allowed us to hire a part-time employee who could focus on a specific project."

MIKE HORTON was hired in October 2022 to assist with the establishing of Morton County's Hope Centers.

"Mike has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals for this project," said O'Hair.

O'Hair hopes that access to these centers will help breakdown the stigma of asking for help or reaching out to someone. "We need everyone to know about our centers and how to access and use them," said O'Hair.

"Things aren't always as they seem," said Horton. "Don't assume everyone is fine. We can all make a difference. Just ask."

The Hope Centers are available to anyone who needs the service. You do not have to be a Morton County resident to use them. Each center is equipped with a phone that automatically dials the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline, which also provides access to translators and services for military or LGBTQ persons. Each center is within walking distances inside the city limits of each town.

"You don't have to be a professional to lend a hand to a neighbor or friend who is struggling," said O'Hair. "There are plenty of resources out there to help. I would encourage people to help people. There's no wrong way to do it. The most important thing is encouraging people to help others and share resources."

Additional information on Morton County's Hope Centers can be found on their Facebook page (Morton County, KS Economic Development). Those interested in assisting with the project or who have questions, may call the Morton County Economic Development office at 620-697-2525.

You don't have to be a professional to lend a hand to a neighbor or friend who is struggling.

ALEXIS O'HAIR, MORTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DIRECTOR

Safety Demonstration Held For High School Students

Grant County Junior Leadership students participated in Pioneer Electric’s live safety demonstration during their tour of the cooperative’s building on Jan. 18.

Pioneer Electric’s Safety and Compliance department offers **FREE** electrical safety demonstrations to members and organizations within our service territory.

“Providing these safety demonstrations is incredibly important,” said Ryan Delay, safety and compliance specialist for Pioneer Electric. “The information you learn at one of our demonstrations could save your life.”

Pioneer Electric offers two types of demonstrations:

Table-top demonstrations offer a look at every day scenarios members could encounter with electricity. It is a great option for classrooms, club meetings or smaller events.

Our safety demonstration trailer gives a real-life look at how electricity interacts with different objects and materials.

Both demonstrations are available for members to book, at no cost, by submitting the online form at www.pioneerelectric.coop.



ABOVE: Students witness firsthand how the rubber and metal in tires can interact with electricity.



Pioneer's Safety and Compliance Specialist Ryan Delay (left) speaks to the Grant County Junior Leadership class about the hazards of coming into contact with electricity.



BELOW: Natalia Jasso (center) examines a lineman's glove — an essential tool to help crews work safely.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age of Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs

or activities. The person responsible for coordinating the organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is **LINDSAY CAMPBELL**. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, DC 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.