



DAVID CHURCHWELL

# K.C. ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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**Our mission** is to provide our members with safe, reliable service at the lowest cost, while maintaining an environmentally responsible, accountable and sustainable operation now and in the future.

## HOW DO WE MAINTAIN RELIABILITY?

BY DAVID CHURCHWELL GENERAL MANAGER

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation is the nationwide entity responsible for the reliability of the electric grid, and their 2022–2023 Winter Reliability Assessment should provide a wake-up call to us all. NERC’s assessment finds that a large portion of the North American Bulk Power System is at risk of insufficient electricity supplies during peak winter conditions. Specifically, higher peak demand projections, inadequate generator weatherization, fuel supply risks and natural gas infrastructure are contributing to risks to the grid across North America.

The report isn’t all bad news, though. There’s some good news later in the report for K.C. Electric Association and you, its consumer-members, as the regional evaluation for our part of the country determined that the expected generating resources meet operating reserve requirements under normal and extreme peak-demand scenarios this year. Is that good enough? Can we take that assessment and be confident that our grid will remain reliable for years into the future? Unfortunately, the answer is no. We will likely have a battle ahead of us to maintain the reliability that we’ve all come to expect.

One major risk to grid reliability stems from the current legislative and regulatory environments in Colorado. The legislature has mandated an energy transition that will shut down thousands of megawatts of dispatchable resources, such as coal and natural gas power plants, and replace them with intermittent resources, such as solar and wind farms, by the end of this decade. This transition, in and of itself, is

not the problem, but it does require that every utility engage in a thorough planning process to carefully implement the changes without negatively impacting grid reliability. Which leads me to the current regulatory situation in Colorado.

K.C.’s power supplier, Tri-State G&T, along with many other generation operators in the state, are required to undergo extensive energy resource planning exercises under the watchful eye of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. The reliability problem is that this planning requirement does not extend to all wholesale power suppliers that serve load in Colorado. Xcel Energy is concerned enough with this gap in regulatory oversight that it is introducing a bill in the 2023 legislative session to address the issue.

There’s an old saying: “A lack of planning on your part doesn’t constitute an emergency on my part.” Unfortunately, that couldn’t be further from the truth when it comes to the electric grid. Xcel Energy is the “Balancing Authority” responsible for ensuring that there are adequate generation resources to serve the majority of Colorado, and not just for its own consumers. Our electric grid is like a perfectly balanced teeter-totter, where the amount of electricity being produced must match the amount of electricity that consumers want to use at every given moment. If there’s not enough generation available for the electric demand, then the whole system can fail. Historically, the amount of generation producing energy could be ramped up and down under control of the Balancing Authority to match the electricity

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

consumed, but as dispatchable generators are replaced with renewable resources that cannot be controlled in the same way, Balancing Authorities may have to instead control the amount of electricity consumed in the form of controlled blackouts. If any wholesale power provider serving load in Colorado fails to adequately plan and ensure its generation resources can serve its loads, then there could be reliability issues across the whole system that we share.

The bill that Xcel is proposing isn't

perfect, but we are working with like-minded entities across the state to amend the bill. It is likely that we will need your help to get this bill across the finish line at the Colorado legislature. While it's too early to tell, we may ask you to participate in a letter-writing campaign during the 2023 legislative session. It is imperative that we let our elected representatives know that unreliable electric service is not an option, and every utility must pull their weight to avoid causing problems for all of us.

## Attention High School Juniors: Apply for Leadership Camp Today!

K.C. Electric Association will award one high school junior a trip to Youth Leadership Camp in Glen Eden, Colorado. The camp is in June and the time to apply is NOW.

Applications may be obtained from K.C. Electric by calling 719-743-2431 or visiting [www.kcelectric.coop](http://www.kcelectric.coop) and clicking on the Community tab. Under Community, select Youth Camp, scroll down to the bottom and select Application.

**Applications are due to the K.C. Electric office no later than January 12, 2023.** Drop off your completed application to K.C. Electric at 422 3rd Ave., Hugo, or mail to K.C. Electric Association, attn: Manager of Member Services, George Ehlers, PO BOX 8, Hugo, CO 80821.



## Claim Your Savings

Each month, members have a chance to claim a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. All you must do if you find your account number is call the Hugo office at 719-743-2431 and ask for your credit. The account numbers are listed below. How simple is that?

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

- **Andrew Worden, Burlington — 1118680001**
- **Shirley R. Ciskowski, Hugo — 634800010**
- **Grant Dykstra, Seibert — 800300002**
- **Roberta A. Hughston, Flagler — 521200013**

In November, three consumer-members called to claim their savings: John Engelbrecht, Cheyenne Wells; Martha Schaal, Burlington; Zylpha North, Flagler.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know insulating your electric water heater can reduce standby heat loss by 25%–45%? This could save you 7%–16% on annual water heating costs. Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy efficiency and save you money each month.

The Dept. of Energy rates this project as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for project tips and additional considerations.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



# Preventing Home Electrical Fires



Fire departments respond to an average of **46,700** home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

**Over a recent 4-year period...**



## 30%

happened in cold weather months (Nov. – Feb.)



## Fires caused

an estimated average of:

**390 Deaths**  
**1,070 Injuries**

## 1

Wiring and related equipment were involved in the **greatest number of home electrical fires.**

Lighting, a lamp or a bulb was involved in the **second largest number of fires.**



## WARNING SIGNS of electrical issues:

Damaged cords and flickering lights

Discolored outlets and switch plates

Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses

Hire a licensed contractor to ensure that your home's wiring is **installed to code** and functioning properly. Learn more at:

**Safe Electricity.org**

Source: NFPA's Electrical Fires Report, 2022



## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE SOON

Each year, K.C. Electric Association proudly awards scholarships to graduating seniors who reside in its service territory and whose parents receive electric service from K.C. Electric. Application forms and copies of rules and procedures for scholarships are available online at [www.kcelectric.coop](http://www.kcelectric.coop). Applications are also available by calling George Ehlers at K.C. Electric at 1-800-700-3123.

Scholarship applications must be received at K.C. Electric, PO Box 8, Hugo, CO 80821, by **Thursday, February 9, 2023.**

Send all applications to:  
K.C. Electric Association  
Attn: George Ehlers  
PO Box 8, Hugo, CO 80821

If you have questions or need an application mailed to you, please call George Ehlers at 719-743-2431.



## The Shocking Truth

**It may be tempting to use an electronic device that has a frayed cord or damaged plug-in to save money, but your safest option is to discard or repair damaged electronics that can shock or electrocute the user.**

# HOME HEATING HURDLES

## Why you should be cautious when heating your home

Space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves are leading causes of fires in U.S. homes, according to the National Fire Protection Association. The term “homes” includes one- and two-family homes (as well as manufactured homes), apartments, townhouses and other multi-family dwellings.

During a recent four-year period, local fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 48,530 fires involving heating equipment. The fires resulted in 500 civilian (non-first-responder) deaths, 1,350 civilian injuries and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage, according to NFPA’s Home Heating Fires report published in 2021.

- Heating equipment caused one in seven home fires and 19% of home fire deaths.
- Most home heating fire deaths (81%) included stationary or portable space heaters.
- More than half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.
- Nearly half (48%) of all home heating fires occurred in December, January and February.
- Failure to clean equipment, such as chimney flues, accounted for a quarter of all heating equipment fires.

In addition, approximately two in five home-heating equipment fires involved items that ran on what is considered solid fuel, such as wood-burning or pellet stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. However, electric-powered heating devices were responsible for the largest share of losses, accounting for more than half of the fatalities, three in five injuries, and two-fifths of the property damage.

Follow these safety tips to use space heaters safely:

- Read all instructions and use space heaters only as recommended.
- Do not leave space heaters unattended.
- Plug them directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by space heaters cycling on and off.
- Unplug any other items from the outlet you are using and try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Turn the heaters off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Do not use heaters that are in disrepair or have frayed cords or damaged plugs.
- Place heaters on flat, level surfaces and never on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
- Unplug and put space heaters out of the reach of children when not in use.

Always use space heaters with care. For additional safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

*feeling chilled?*

## HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY

- 1** Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away
- 2** Place on a flat, level surface
- 3** Make sure the cord is not frayed or cracked
- 4** Plug it directly into an outlet
- 5** Follow all instructions and use models endorsed by a reputable testing lab
- 6** Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which can overheat
- 7** Do not use around small children or pets
- 8** Do not use one with a damaged plug or prongs

**Safe Electricity.org**