

2024 Year in Review

By **David Churchwell** General Manager

I hope everyone had a productive 2024, a Merry Christmas, and safely rang in the new year.

2024 was a challenging but also successful year for K.C. Electric. There was a lot of activity in our service territory this past year with Tri-State Generation and Transmission's Eastern Colorado transmission expansion and Xcel Energy's Power Pathway transmission project that will bring additional wind, solar, and battery storage development in the near future. Additional retirements of irrigated acres in the south fork focus zone of the Republican River Water Conservation District continues to impact our operations as these wells retire. Below are a few highlights from 2024.

In 2024, our crews made progress on our construction work plan. K.C. crews upgraded several miles of three-phase overhead line in the Stratton area, replaced transmission and distribution poles that have reached end-of-life, and continued work on the voltage conversion project in Hugo. Crews also worked on transformer upgrades at our Sand Creek and Huppert Shutte substations. These projects were constructed entirely by K.C. crews and will increase system capacity and improve our system reliability for years to come.

In June, our annual meeting was held in Cheyenne Wells and we celebrated 78 years since K.C. was first incorporated. Jerry Allen from Cheyenne County, and Terry Tagtmeyer and Justin Rueb from Kit Carson County were elected to serve a three-year term on the board of directors. During the annual meeting, Robert



Bledsoe was recognized for serving 40 years on K.C.'s board of directors and Cheyenne Wells area foreman Judge Unruh was recognized for serving the K.C. membership for 45 years.

June was also the month that we debuted our new bill design. The design process took several months to accomplish and the finished product looks great. The new design is easier to read and

provides members with more information than ever before on their current and past usage.

In July, K.C. Electric was once again recognized by our statewide organization — Colorado Rural Electric Association — for another year of no lost time injuries. Not only did K.C. employees work the entire year without a lost time accident, but they also worked the entire year without experiencing any medical reportable incidents. This is a great accomplishment for the employees of K.C. Electric considering the dangerous and varied work conditions that our employees endure throughout the year. Safety is our cornerstone and will not be compromised for any reason.

In October, the board of directors approved a general capital credit retirement of more than \$1.48 million, in addition, more than \$140,000 in capital credits were returned to estates throughout the year for a total 2024 capital credit retirement of more than \$1.6 million. Over the past five years, K.C. has retired more than \$7.8 million in capital credits to you, our member-owners.

K.C. is governed by democratic principles and you, the membership, elect our board of directors to guide



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

K.C. ELECTRIC MISSION

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.

K.C. Electric Staff

David Churchwell

General Manager

dchurchwell@kcelectric.coop

Bo Randolph

Office Manager and CFO

brandolph@kcelectric.coop

Darren Fox

Operations Manager

dfox@kcelectric.coop

George Ehlers

Member Services Specialist

and IT Manager

gehlers@kcelectric.coop

Phone 719-743-2431

Toll-free 800-700-3123

Web kcelectric.coop

Address

422 3rd Avenue
Hugo, CO 80821

YOUR CO-OP NEWS

and govern the cooperative. Along with approving rates and our annual budget, the board of directors also monitor K.C.'s equity, debt, capital credits, and overall financial health. Financially, we had a good year in 2024, and in December, I was glad to announce to the membership that K.C. would not need to have a rate increase for 2025.

Legislative and environmental changes continue to keep the electric industry changing at a very rapid pace. Colorado legislation has mandated that coal generation facilities in the state be shut down by the end of the decade and replaced with renewable energy sources. This transition will continue to put upward

rate pressure on the wholesale power we purchase from Tri-State Generation and Transmission and extensive planning will need to be undertaken to ensure reliability isn't negatively impacted and that rates stay affordable.

The year ahead will continue to bring new challenges both financially and operationally for us, but the board of directors and employees of K.C. Electric will continue to do everything in our control to keep expenses down, and customer service and reliability high.

On behalf of everyone at K.C. Electric, I wish each of you a successful 2025.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: energy.gov



CLAIM YOUR SAVINGS

Each month, members have a chance to claim a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. All you must do is find your account number, 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).

Terri Thompson, Burlington — 1114xxxxxx
Denton Talbert, Cheyenne Wells — 453xxxxxx
Eric Palmer, Cheyenne Wells — 4192xxxxxx
Mike Lamb, Burlington — 11583xxxxxx

In December, three consumers called to claim their savings: Carole Plasterer, Stratton; Cindy Stansbury, Cheyenne Wells; and Helen Younger, Cheyenne Wells.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 6

Each year, K.C. Electric Association awards scholarships to students who are continuing their education. If your parents or guardians get their electricity from K.C. Electric, you are eligible to apply.

Application forms and copies of rules and procedures for scholarships are available online at kcelectric.coop. Copies are also available by calling George Ehlers at K.C. Electric at 1-800-700-3123. Applications must be received at K.C. Electric, P.O. Box 8, Hugo, CO 80821, **by February 6 at 5:30 p.m.**

Mail all applications to:

K.C. Electric Association, Inc.
Attention: George Ehlers
Manager Member Services
P.O. Box 8
Hugo, CO 80821

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

Horses Gallop and So Can Power Lines

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage, or even fall to the ground.

There is not much K.C. Electric can do to completely stop galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, many power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, other storms throughout the year can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees or limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact K.C. Electric or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines —stay away from all lines.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).

Normal power line **Lines weighed down by ice** **Top line melted after bottom line**

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

SafeElectricity.org[®]

Source: Jerrl Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

What Happens During a Power Outage?

Here in the United States, we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day. Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours per year.

What happens on our end when your power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for K.C. Electric work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to

follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs that will restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- Evaluating power plants for damage and restoring them to working order.
- Repairing transmission lines that carry power to large areas.
- Assessing and repairing substations, distribution lines and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore power as safely and efficiently as possible, day and night.

For more information about preparing for outages or storms, or about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE



STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS



STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES



STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS



UTILITY SCAMS TIP OF THE MONTH

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have *overpaid* their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it's likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)