

The CIRCUIT

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative



*** Proudly Serving Rural Kansas for Over 75 Years

April 2018

Be Prepared for Storm Season

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit:

Water - Three day supply, one gallon per person per day.

Tools - Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.

First Aid Kit and Prescriptions: First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at: www.ready.gov

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Annual Meeting

Don't forget! The 79th Annual Meeting of the Membership is Tuesday, April 17th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Kansas State Fair. We hope to see you there!

Lineman Appreciation Day April 9th

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 9, 2018, Ark Valley will honor the dedicated linemen who put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on. Seven lineworkers maintain over 2,000 miles of line covering 9 counties in Ark Valley's service territory.



This is the day we honor and recognize these hard-working people who often work in challenging weather conditions to ensure we all have safe and reliable power. In fact, linemen are often first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety officers. In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a

neighboring community, county, or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

Ark Valley would like to invite our members to take a moment and thank our linemen for the work they do. You can do this by sending a note of thanks, or you can post a note of appreciation on our Facebook page.



** Attention ** Make the Solar Interconnection Request a Priority

A few members inquired about solar after they read the "Considering Solar" article that was published in last month's newsletter. This month's article addresses some of the interconnection questions that came up during those conversations.

- What should members do first if they are considering installing solar? Members should have an approved application from Ark Valley before a purchase is made or construction begins. Failure to get preapproval could result in a financial loss for the member if the application doesn't meet the requirements for interconnection.
- What are the size requirements? The solar installation for a residential consumer is limited to 25kW or less.

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Drawing Winner

Robert W. Behnke is the winner of our \$25.00 readership drawing. To claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley by April 30, 2018 & give us the account number from your electric bill.



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How Bill Pay Works Through Your Bank

It's easy and convenient - log into your bank account and tell your bank which bills you want to pay and when. But how exactly does your payment reach Ark Valley? A lot goes on behind the scenes you may not realize. The money is debited from your account and gets sent to a 3rd party payment processor who then either mails a check or pays it "electronically". This means it can be anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks before Ark Valley receives your payment.

If the payment processor sends a check, you need to factor in enough time for the check to reach us through the mail after they have processed it. Recently, some processors have been using a credit card to pay on our IVR phone payment system. This has resulted in high credit card fees for the cooperative (due to the type of credit card they're using) as well as errors in them misapplying the funds. These "electronic payments" are happening behind the scenes, and unfortunately, it's not possible to catch their error until the member discovers it.

Fortunately, Ark Valley offers many convenient payment options that eliminate the processing delays.

- Pay through SmartHub® at arkvalley.com which also shows you helpful usage information,
- through the SmartHub® mobile app on your phone,
- through the IVR phone system (844-262-2443),
- or sign up for recurring bank drafts in the office and it will be debited from your bank account on the last business day of the month.
- Recurring payments through a bank account or credit card can also be set up through SmartHub® or IVR.

Attention Make the Solar Interconnection Request a Priority

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- Do members have to interconnect their solar project with the distribution system? Most solar arrays are dependent on a connection to the electric system to operate the inverters. You will also need the electric utility service when the solar project is not producing any power. Also, without the interconnection, you will not receive payment for excess generation.
- What are the fees for the application process? The interconnection request for a residential consumer requires a non-refundable processing fee of \$250 and a deposit of \$500. After the interconnection process is finalized and all expenses incurred by the cooperative have been deducted from the deposit, the customer will receive a refund for any unused portion of the deposit.
- What does Ark Valley pay for the excess generation that is put onto the distribution system? Ark Valley will pay the consumer at a rate of 150% of the wholesale monthly average cost of energy per kilowatt hour for generators that are appropriately sized for the customer's anticipated electric load. For oversized generators, that portion of generation is compensated at 100% of the systems wholesale energy rate. The credit will be applied to the customer's account.

Before you install solar, we encourage you to contact the cooperative to protect you and your investment. The next newsletter will provide examples of solar investments and the expected payback.

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Trustees for the Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association held its regular meeting for the month of February on February 26, 2018.

The Board reviewed the Cooperative's margins for 2017. Margins are all amounts received and receivable from the furnishing of electric energy in excess of operating costs and expenses. The General Manager, Jackie Holmberg, presented the margins available for allocation derived from Ark Valley and its energy provider, KEPCo, for 2017, which totaled \$1,313,829.81. The Board passed a motion to allocate the margins furnished by each patron to their capital credit account. At the Board's discretion, the capital credits will be retired and paid out to each member accordingly. Ark Valley has a policy to retire patron capital credits on a 20-year rotation cycle.

Considerable time was spent reviewing and adopting provisions for the 2018 Annual Budget. The Annual Budget is a planning document used to project Ark Valley's monthly revenues and expenses. The anticipated operating revenue is projected to be approximately \$13.5 million for 2018, and the anticipated total cost for electrical service is projected to be approximately \$12.7 million. The Board and management regularly examine costs to determine if the Cooperative is running efficiently. If cost overruns occur in one area of the Cooperative's budget, or if revenues decline unexpectedly, spending is adjusted accordingly so the Cooperative remains on stable financial footing.

The Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.