

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

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Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Chairman

Gordon McClureJasper

Vice Chairman

Ron Viehman.....Lawrence

Secretary/Treasurer

Dan Strine Wabash

Directors

Ava LemmonCrawford

Brandon Graves Richland

Kurt HolscherCrawford

Dave Thoele Effingham

Scott Weiss.....Lawrence

Justin Parcel..... Clark

Dave Sheppard.....Jasper

Ted Helmink Cumberland

General Manager

Tamara Phillips



87th Annual Meeting of Members

Members of Norris Electric Cooperative (NEC) gathered in the gymnasium of Newton Community High School on Saturday, Feb. 22, for the cooperative's 87th Annual Meeting of Members. The event provided an opportunity for consumer-members to receive updates from the cooperative's leadership on key initiatives and developments. Board President Gordon McClure opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and acknowledging their active participation in the cooperative.

During the manager's report, General Manager Tamara Phillips detailed the cooperative's 2024 accomplishments, highlighting the completion of 30 miles of line rebuilds. "We are making great progress, with only 100 miles remaining in our long-term upgrade plan," Phillips noted. "These improvements have already led to an 8% reduction in outages, thanks to advancements in system technology and vegetation management."

Phillips also emphasized the cooperative's focus on infrastructure improvements. "Our new pole yard is enhancing operational efficiency, and we are actively

evaluating upgrades to our meter system to give members better tools to monitor their energy usage," she explained.

Despite increasing power costs, Phillips reassured members that rates will remain steady for another year. "We understand how important stable rates are to our members, and we are working diligently to manage costs while maintaining service reliability," she said.

Phillips also announced Norris Electric's transition to Dairyland Power Cooperative as its energy supplier in mid-2026. "This partnership with Dairyland Power will strengthen our ability to deliver dependable energy to our members," she added. Dairyland President and CEO Brent Ridge, along with key executives, were introduced to members. Capital credits remain a priority, with \$1.4 million refunded to members from 1988 to 1989 in 2024. "Returning capital credits is one of the biggest benefits of cooperative membership, and we are proud to have refunded \$16.5 million to members over the past decade," Phillips said.

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Annual Meeting continued from 18A

Treasurer Dan Strine presented the financial report, emphasizing that Norris Electric's records adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and Government Auditing Standards. President McClure provided a financial overview, stating, "Our commitment remains to provide reliable power at affordable rates while continuing necessary infrastructure upgrades."

During the meeting, Robinson High School student Victoria McMillan and Newton Community High School student Alex Birchfield were introduced. McMillan and Birchfield represented NEC in June 2024 during the annual Youth to Washington Tour. They thanked NEC members for their support as they shared their top experiences while on the trip, seeing monuments, speaking with legislators, learning more about the co-op business model, and meeting students across Illinois and the U.S.

In addition, NEC also awarded four \$500 scholarships to high school seniors in attendance. The scholarship winners were Sydney Kinder, Newton Community High School; Ava Patchett, Oblong High School; Noah Koester, Teutopolis High School; and Sophia Niemerg, Dieterich High School.

The results of the election for four seats on NEC's board of directors were announced. Kurt Holscher, Crawford County; Justin Parcel, Clark County; Ted Helmink, Cumberland County; and Dave Sheppard, Jasper County were all reelected to the board.

After a call for new business and many prizes awarded, the meeting was adjourned. Members were then treated to fried chicken and pulled pork for lunch. All registered members in attendance also received a \$10 bill credit on their electric bill.



Important update regarding payment options

In response to the rising costs in today's economy, we are implementing a change designed to keep billing costs low. Over the years, Norris Electric Cooperative (NEC) has introduced a variety of payment options to make it more convenient for our members. Due to the availability of these options, the board of directors has decided to discontinue the collection of electric bills at local banks. As of May 1, 2025, banks will no longer accept payments for Norris Electric Cooperative.

Below are alternative payment methods available to you:

- **Automatic draft** — NEC will automatically draft your checking or savings account the day before the due date. An ACH form is available at your bank or the Norris website for your convenience.
- **Bank online payments** — Set up an electronic payment through your bank, which will transfer funds directly to NEC.

- **Over the phone** — You can make payments anytime through our automated payment center by calling 877-783-8765.
- **Online payments or mobile app** — Pay through our website at www.norriselectric.com or by downloading the Norris app from your app store.
- **Norris Electric office** — Payments can be made in person during our office hours, Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. A secure drop box is available outside the office for payments made after hours.
- **Mail** — Payments can always be mailed to our office.

Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for being a valued member of Norris Electric Cooperative.

Lineworkers are wired for service

In the quiet hours before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day, often clad in flame-resistant clothing, safety goggles, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots.

They are the individuals who epitomize dedication to service in its purest form. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 18, this is an important moment to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable, and our communities connected.

Norris crews travel across our 8 county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected

to the grid, businesses stay operational, and emergency services remain accessible — a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

Norris lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and

women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible — lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life.



TOP 10 reasons we appreciate lineworkers

1. They are expertly trained to work on power lines and equipment.
2. They are dedicated to safely and efficiently maintaining power.
3. They have a heart for service, always looking out for their communities.
4. They conquer heights without hesitation.
5. They prioritize safety every second of every day.
6. They answer the call – day or night – to restore power.
7. They work in extreme weather conditions.
8. They go when and where they are needed, supporting communities nationwide when severe weather strikes.
9. They have each other's backs and work together like family.
10. They power our lives and energize our communities!

Safe Electricity.org®

Thank you, lineworkers, for all you do to keep the lights on.



Job Fair and Career Day

Norris Electric was proud to participate in the Job Fair and Career Day at Newton Community High School this February. Our team set up a booth filled with valuable information for students exploring career paths in the energy industry.

Students had the opportunity to learn about the role of electric cooperatives and the skills required to become a lineworker. We also provided details on some of the best lineworker schools in the area, helping guide those interested in a hands-on, rewarding career in the field.

In addition to career insights, our booth featured giveaways, making the experience both fun and informative. We enjoyed connecting with students and sharing the many opportunities available in the electrical industry.

Norris Electric is committed to supporting the next generation of workers and looks forward to future events where we can continue to educate and inspire young minds!

