



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1511 14,000 Rd, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330
866-784-5500
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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Contact Us

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FROM THE MANAGER

See You at the Annual Meeting

Most of us lead busy lives. We find ourselves multitasking and constantly checking phones and email to keep up with the demands of modern life. Thanks to technology, we can accomplish many tasks electronically and remotely to be more efficient. And with so many pressing obligations, we like to protect our “spare” time. Invitations to attend in-person meetings and gatherings are weighed carefully as we decide whether or not our time and effort to attend is beneficial. The answer to the question, “what’s in it for me?” must be compelling. You may think attending Twin Valley Electric’s annual meeting would be easy to lump into the “no benefit to me” category. However, I’d ask you to think again.

Twin Valley Electric exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to its consumer-members (that’s you!). Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of all members and to serve the long-term interests of our local communities. This is where you can help.

As a member of the community, you have a perspective that is valuable—and we invite you to share it with the co-op. At the annual meeting, co-op leaders will discuss priorities and challenges and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years. Annual meeting is also the time to vote for board members who will represent you—the members of the co-op.

Board members are local consumers, just like you.

Twin Valley Electric is one of the few local organizations uniquely positioned to bring together all members of the community. It is worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.

Perhaps you may feel you have nothing to add to the discussion, so there is no need to attend the annual meeting. However, every energy bill you pay to the co-op helps ensure better service and reliability for the whole community. Your dollars are reinvested locally into improvements that impact the reliability and affordability of your energy, and Twin Valley Electric wants to hear from you to help us make informed decisions as we plan for the future.

While Twin Valley Electric provides convenient electronic options for bill paying and communication, there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

If you’ve never attended our annual meeting, or if it’s been awhile, please stop by. We’ll have food, fun and door prizes, so mark your calendar for the annual meeting on April 11.



Reed Metzger

Working on the LINE

Twin Valley employees **JORDAN ROBISON** and **TYLER KENNETT** (left) **ERIC CORNELL** (right) and **KENDAL MANNERS** (on the ground) install new service to the Oswego Cemetery during a bitter cold January day.



Smart Houses No Longer a Fantasy

Not that long ago, the 1999 movie *Smart House*—which featured a fully-automated dream home run by a computer named Pat—seemed futuristic and farfetched. Fast forward to today, and there are voice-assisted devices you can talk to and ask to control anything from your television and your lights to your mood (OK, it can't literally change your mood but you could ask it to tell you jokes or play upbeat music).

Using smart home devices doesn't mean your digs will have a higher IQ, but it does mean your home could have a leaner energy budget. "Smart homes" are houses that have a number of interconnected devices and home appliances that perform certain actions or functions and many are designed to save money, time and energy.

Here are some smart home devices—that may or may not be interconnected—that could save some green:

Energy monitoring devices, which give real-time feedback on energy consumption and track your energy stats (kind of like a Fitbit for your home)—these typically cost between \$200 and \$300 but can make a real difference in your energy bills if you make adjustments based on feedback.

The SmartThings Hub that acts as the brains of your smart home – with it (and compatible items), you can open your garage door, turn on music or start the coffee maker. When you leave, it can lock the doors, turn off the lights, adjust your smart thermostat and activate a security camera.

A smart lighting outdoor module, such as GE

Z-Wave, which works with Alexa – this allows you to control all your outdoor lighting and appliances, including seasonal and landscape lighting, and schedule or turn outdoor lights on or off from anywhere.

Smart bulbs, which are internet-capable LED bulbs that allow lighting to be controlled remotely – many of them can change color, some can play music, and specialty smart bulbs may help you sleep better by emitting colors designed to help regulate natural melatonin production or provide soothing light that doesn't disrupt circadian rhythm.

Smart sprinkler systems – these water your garden only when plants need it. They take local weather forecasts into account and will delay watering if rain is headed your way.

Water leak detectors and shut-off systems – some are SmartThings compatible but can be operated independently. The simplest versions sit on the floor and alert you when they get wet. More elaborate versions continually monitor the flow of your water system, informing you if water pressure changes and allowing you to shut off the water supply if a leak is detected.

Smart appliances and devices save money because in many cases they allow you to use less energy. They're also convenient, fun to use and can give you peace of mind. In short, they may be worth it in the long run, but only if the initial outlay fits your budget.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

TYPES OF HEAT PUMPS

There are three main types of heat pump systems. Use the information below to determine the system that's best suited for your climate and home.

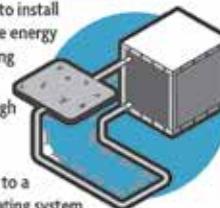
AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

- Most commonly used heat pumps
- Moves heat rather than converting it from a fuel like combustion heating systems do
- Can reduce heating costs by about 50 percent when compared to baseboard heaters or electric furnaces
- Newer, more efficient systems now offer legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions like the Northeast and Midwest. *Note: If temperatures in your area drop below 10 to 25 F, you will need an auxiliary heating system (depending on the size of the system).*



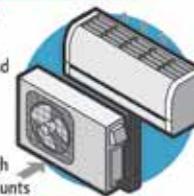
GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMPS

- More expensive to install but provide more energy savings for heating and cooling
- Move heat through pipes buried underground
- When compared to a conventional heating system, can reduce energy use by 25 to 50 percent
- Effective in extreme climates
- Not ideal for smaller lots and certain soil conditions



DUCTLESS MINI-SPLIT HEAT PUMPS

- Easier to install, quiet, small in size
- Flexible for heating and cooling individual rooms and smaller spaces
- No energy loss through ductwork, which accounts for more than 30 percent of a home's energy use for space heating/cooling.
- Installation can be pricey, but federal incentives may be available



Heat pump systems should be installed by a licensed professional. Contact your local electric cooperative for more information about options and potential incentives.

Sources: Dept. of Energy and Consumer Reports