







## Co-ops Honored by KCC

Two Kansas electric cooperatives have been recognized as winners of the state Co-op Month award. Butler was named the winner in the electric cooperative category, while Pioneer Electric received an honorable mention.

Both electric cooperatives will be formally recognized on March 10 during the Kansas Cooperative Council's annual meeting in Hutchinson.

Co-op Month winners are chosen based upon the activities they plan each October to help educate Kansans about cooperatives.

Butler Rural Electric initiated a member-benefit card program – the Touchstone Energy Cooperative Connections card, held a member appreciation week of events at the co-op, participated in the fall corn festival and gave high-voltage demonstrations at a water festival.

Butler also sponsored a coloring contest, assisted with a new permanent exhibit at the county museum, sponsored high school and community college football games, and updated a link on their Web site to the national Co-op Month Web pages.

Pioneer Electric held a safety festival, staged safety demonstrations and sponsored a poster contest for third graders. They also hosted a high school football tailgate party, luncheons at area senior centers and a Grant County Chamber of Commerce coffee at the co-op.

## Cooperative Members Show Appreciation to Linemen's Efforts

As a massive winter storm moved across Kansas in December, ice and falling tree limbs toppled nearly 11,000 utility poles. The damage caused outages to more than 58,000 cooperative members – some who were without electricity for nearly two weeks.

Despite the approaching holidays, thousands of cooperative and contractor line crews from across Kansas and 10 other states suited up, said good-bye to their families, and headed out to help. They began the grueling work in muddy and icy conditions to remove trees, rebuild power lines and restore service to the members. Their hard work and long hours did not go unnoticed.

The linemen and contractors at Brown-Atchison, one of the hardest-hit cooperatives, were invited to an appreciation dinner hosted by the Kickapoo tribe. Volunteers served a hot dinner on Christmas Eve to nearly 200 linemen who had helped with the restoration efforts.

"It was like a big family dinner," said Rod Gerdes, Brown-Atchison's manager.

Other cooperatives had similar ex-

periences. Members volunteered to cook meals, do laundry, and deliver items.

DS&O needed assistance getting their vehicles through the thick mud. "We had members with four-wheel-drive tractors help haul our line crews to the areas that needed to be repaired," said Derrick Rutherford, DS&O's marketing and key accounts manager.

Dennis Deines, Western's member services director, told of a lady who lost power while baking cookies. "She said that while the last batch didn't turn out, our linemen were welcome to have the cookies she had baked, especially because the cookies were still warm."

Carla Bickel, Ninnescah's manager, received a poem written by one of her members who had been without power for several days. Virginia Russell of St. John penned the poem in the style of "Twas the Night Before Christmas".

Russell wrote, "...7:30 p.m. and the darkest of night, Those fellows, those Heroes had come to our plight. With a few hundred poles and a flick of a switch, The lights were on with a narry a hitch!"

## Job Opportunities

### High Line Services Seeks Foreman

High Line Services of Dighton is seeking a General Foreman. Must have experience as a journeyman, running crews and bidding jobs. Must have good communication skills and support safety practices. Must possess CDL class A and be willing to travel and work overtime, as needed. Successful applicant will need to pass a physical, drug test, and related skills testing. High Line Services offers a competitive salary and benefits. For more information or to apply, call Earl Steffens at (800) 407-2217 or visit [www.highlineservices.net](http://www.highlineservices.net).

# RuralPower

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.  
PO Box 4267  
Topeka, KS 66604-0267

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