



# LEWIS COUNTY REC

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## From the desk of Travis Mathes, Manager of Member Services



Summer seems to have flown by and the Missouri State Fair and back to school are just around the corner, which means it is Annual Meeting time here at Lewis County REC. If you have not registered and voted by mail or absentee, you still have an opportunity to come out to the drive-thru meeting and do so. Our drive-thru meeting will be held at the office facility on

Thursday, August 4th. You can drive-thru to register and vote from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and if you would like you can attend the in-person business meeting it will be held promptly at 6:00 p.m. in our warehouse. The same reports that will be given at the business meeting were printed in last months Rural Missouri.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that we offer a round up program. Many of you may be wondering what that means. To put it simple if you sign up for the round up program your bill will be rounded up to the nearest whole dollar each month and that money will in turn be donated to the Lewis County REC Cares Foundation. The Lewis County REC Cares Foundation makes donations to 501c3 organizations throughout the Lewis County REC service territory. Since the program started in 2019 the Foundation has made \$59,400 worth of donations to organizations in the Lewis County REC Service territory. These donations are made possible by you rounding your bills up to the nearest whole dollar. If you are not already participating in the program, simply, give the office a call today and we will be glad to get you signed up for the program. Members can opt in and out of the program at any time.

Lewis County REC Cares Foundation is a totally separate entity from Lewis County REC. It has its own set of By-Laws and is governed by a separate Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Lewis County REC Cares board members who donate their time to the organization. Linda Rutledge, Judy Smith, Ryan St.Clair, Renee Kirchner, Janice McGinnis, and Jeannie James. I would like to thank these individuals for taking time to serve on this board. The Lewis County REC Cares Foundation Board meets quarterly to review applications. If you are part of a 501c3 organization and would like to apply for a grant, simply reach out to me and I would be happy to get you an application. Concern for community is one of our core guiding principles and by offering the round up program

allows us to give back to the communities in which we serve and live.

I have been getting a large number of calls concerning solar. Many of you may have been targeted on social media by solar dealers trying to sell you solar panels at your farm, home, or business. These social media ads claim that you will get large rebates and high returns on your investment if you install solar. They even offer to finance the entire project for you. Don't fall victim to this sales scheme. These dealers are also using the sales pitch, "You will never have to pay your electric provider again." This is a false statement. According to current Missouri Statute your utility will always bill you for your service availability and security lights, therefore, you will still have a monthly bill from your utility. Missouri currently does NOT offer incentives like our neighboring states do, which can have a major effect on the bottom-line price that you pay for a solar system. Most of the time when the company offers a rebate, the company is simply inflating the cost of the panels to offset the rebate. I want to caution you on the financing options offered by these companies as well. I have seen companies offering low interest up front, no money down, financing options for solar, but when you read the fine print after 24 months the financing will jump as high as 25%.

If you are thinking about solar, please, give me a call and let me talk to you about our net metering agreement and non-standard engineering study policy. Unlike the solar company that has one objective – to sell their products and services – we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine if solar is right for you. We want to insure you will get a return on your investment and/or achieve the ultimate objective you are looking for by installing solar panels, while ensuring that safety and reliability remain the top priority. Members must have a net metering agreement in place with Lewis County REC and a non-standard engineering study must be completed, prior to installation of any alternative energy source. At Lewis County REC we recognize that member interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their options. Before you sign a contract with any company to install alternative energy, please, reach out to us and let us be at the table with you to make sure you are not being taken advantage of. If you have any questions give me a call today and I will be happy to work with you, as well as, provide a list of local, trusted installers that will give you an accurate quote and help you assess what alternate energy is best for you. Until next month, stay cool and healthy, and enjoy the last days of summer as fall is just around the corner!

## Right of Way Clearing

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Lewis County REC works hard to ensure that our rights of way are regularly cleared of trees and brush in order to help reduce potential outages and hazards. Trees and branches growing in or near power lines can cause interruptions in your electric service and uncontrolled brush can impede access to utility structures. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline for maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 15 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.



Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 25 percent of power interruptions occur when trees grow too close to power lines. If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our lineman or contractors will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers, and mowers. In some cases, it is necessary to remove a tree altogether.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a power line. An energized tree branch due to close proximity or contact with a power line is incredibly dangerous, even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

Another benefit to ROW clearing is that it can decrease outage restoration time. When weather strikes, every minute spent clearing a tree or branch off of a power line equals a minute in delay of restoring your power. While winds can blow downed trees into power lines, it's often those trees that were left near the power line that cause the most damage. In addition, that damage has an economic impact on the cooperative, which in turn could affect your electric rates.

Not all outages can be prevented, but investing in vegetation management has both immediate and long-term benefits. By prioritizing our ROW management programs, Lewis County REC is investing in safety, outage reduction, rate stabilization, and increased reliability. As always, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us at (573)-215-4000.



### Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Hot summer days require your electric cooperative to run more expensive generation units to meet the demand for electricity. This drives up the costs for everyone. You can help by avoiding tasks that require large amounts of electricity during peak times, typically early morning and late afternoon. Unplug unneeded devices, wait until late at night to wash clothes or dishes and raise the thermostat a few degrees.



**Please follow us on Facebook to keep up to date on what is going on at Lewis County REC, as well as, learn about safety, and energy efficiency.**

### Look before you leap

- When it comes to outdoor projects, there are two places you should look for hidden hazards: up and down.
- Look up to ensure your project won't bring you into contact with overhead power lines.
- Look down, because there could be underground power lines where you are about to dig. Never dig without first calling Missouri OneCall at 811 or 1-800-DIG-RITE.



## TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

**CALL (TOLL FREE) 1-888-454-4485  
(LOCAL) 215-4000 24 HOURS A DAY**

**Before calling, check your breakers or fuses and check with your neighbors to see if they have power**

**When calling please give the following information:**

**Your name • Meter number and/or location number (if known)**

**Cell Phone or Telephone Number affiliated with the account**

**CALL DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS (7:30-4:00)**

**FOR ALL OTHER SERVICES**