

## CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# The Enlightener

### CMS Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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#### Lightbulb Winners

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- ▶ Christina Bryan
- ▶ Diana Elliott
- ▶ Duane Leiker
- ▶ Stacy Cook
- ▶ Ana Robles

Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!



#### Nondiscrimination

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Energy Market Under Constant Change



**Kirk Thompson**

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumers

are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

The changing energy market has created more options for consumers and, unfortunately, more options for utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations in particular. That's because of two factors.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or water service, especially now in these uncharted times. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or inferior products and services.

#### Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be

from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount.

Scammers are taking advantage of the current pandemic by developing new ways to scam co-op members. Kentucky electric cooperatives recently reported scams in which the scammers contact co-op members telling them they've overpaid their account and will receive a refund. The co-op member is then asked for their bank account information so the "overpayment" can be returned.

You can combat these scams by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not initiate a call with. If you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call us directly at 620-873-2184. Do not use the return phone number given by the scammer.

#### Avoid Solar Scams

Another scam we see from time to time is connected to rooftop solar. Homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from crooks claiming to represent a solar company, promis-

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## Energy Market Under Constant Change

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ing to replace faulty or broken parts or improve efficiency. Again, if you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call the company that installed the solar array if you think there may be a problem. Other than occasional cleaning, rooftop solar (if installed correctly) is virtually maintenance-free.

### Use Trusted Sources

If you're considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there has been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck. Representatives of rooftop solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

CMS Electric Cooperative can offer a candid assessment to determine whether rooftop solar is right for you. After all, CMS Electric Cooperative has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members, and that may or may not include rooftop solar.

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy adviser — your local electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our members. We're just one call or click away, so please reach out with any questions about your electric service or bills — we're here to help.

## 2020 CMS Electric Scholarship Winners

### District 1

**CADEN LOUDERBACK**, Liberal, graduated from Southwestern Heights High School. He is the son of Clayton and Robin Louderback. Caden plans to attend Seward County Community College to study animal science - production management.



Caden Louderback



McKenzie Miller

WHISPERS & WISHES PHOTOGRAPHY

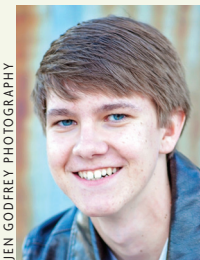
**MCKENZIE MILLER**, Liberal, graduated from Liberal High School. She is the daughter of Sonya and Curtis Miller. McKenzie plans to attend Fort Hays State University to study nursing.

### District 2

**CALEB HEINZ**, Fowler, graduated from Fowler High School. He is the son of Cathy and Van Heinz. Caleb plans to attend Northwest Kansas Technical College to study precision agriculture technology.



Caleb Heinz



Nathaniel Reimer

JEN GODFREY PHOTOGRAPHY

**NATHANIEL REIMER**, Meade, graduated from Meade High School. He is the son of Angie and Carl Reimer. Nathaniel plans to attend Wichita State University to study computer engineering.

### District 3

**EMMA DUNN**, Wilmore, graduated from South Central High School. She is the daughter of Joe and Lisa Dunn. Emma plans to attend Butler Community College to study accounting.



Emma Dunn



Jared Moore

**JARED MOORE**, Coldwater, graduated from South Central High School. He is the son of Merlin and Heather Moore. Jared plans to attend Oklahoma State University to study business.

**LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS**

**OSHA WARNING:** Trimming trees within 10 feet of a power line can be fatal. It's the law; only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines.

**HAPPY**  
*Father's*  
**DAY**  
Sunday, June 21