

DOWNNS

Chamber of Commerce

SPOTLIGHT MEMBER OF THE MONTH



Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a member-owned full service rural electric cooperative serving over 24,000 customers in parts of 18 Northern Kansas Counties. Headquartered in Norton, Kansas, Prairie Land Electric's 88 employees maintain and operate approximately 6974 miles of line. The mission of Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc. is: to make electric energy available to its members at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound economy and good management.

Prairie Land Electric History

In the Fall of 1938 interested citizens of Norton and Decatur counties met in various places for the purpose of organizing a rural electric company to bring the conveniences of electricity to their farms. Other efforts having failed, they were convinced that in order to get the job done they would have to do it themselves. The Norton-Decatur Cooperative Electric Company, Inc. received its charter on October 13, 1938 and became the first rural electric cooperative in Western Kansas.

The first meeting of the board of trustees was held at the City Hall in Norcatour, KS on November 7, 1938. The first certificate to operate as a utility was issued by the Kansas Corporation Commission on December 13th that same year. The area covered by this certificate was along Highway 383 from 8 miles east to 20 miles west of Norton and also an area south and west of the City of Norton.

The first meeting of the members was held at the City Hall in Norcatour on February 14, 1939, with 30 members present. The first Norton-Decatur office was in two rooms in the Broquet building in Norton rented for \$13 per month. Norton-Decatur's first loan from the Rural Electrification Administration was granted on May 19, 1939 in the amount of \$88,000 to construct approximately 104 miles of line. The section of that construction was energized in February 1941. Due to wartime material shortages, further construction became virtually impossible. Power was purchased from

the City of Norton.

On January 1, 1997, history was made when the Northwest Kansas Electric Cooperative Association merged into Norton-Decatur Cooperative Electric Company, Inc. The Norton-Decatur territory now included counties from the Phillips/Smith county line westward to the Colorado border. The first annual meeting of the merged cooperative membership was on April 3, 1997. An important item on the agenda for that meeting was the announcement of the merged cooperative's new name Prairie Land Electric Cooperative Inc.

History was made again on April 1, 2007 when Prairie Land and the other five members of Mid-Kansas Electric Company, LLC completed an acquisition of the West Plains Kansas electric properties owned by Aquila, Inc. With that transaction, Prairie Lands electric service area extended eastward to include customers in Smith, Osborne, Jewell, Mitchell, Republic, Cloud, Washington, and Clay counties. Several counties already in the Prairie Land service area Rooks, Phillips, and Norton gained new customers from the acquisition as well.

Prairie Land Electric Key Statistics

Total Utility Plant	\$180,801,860	Miles of Line	6,974
Operating Revenue	\$65,637,303	Number of Consumers	24,827
Number of Employees	88	Meters per Mile of Line	3.6

Prairie Land Electric

14935 US. Hwy 36, Norton, KS. 67654

Phone 1-800-577-3323 or 785-877-3323