

In the beginning...

In the early 1900s electrification was just a dream. The first efforts toward community power failed.

The town of Cheyenne Wells was the only electrically lighted town on the line of the Union Pacific Railroad between Sharon Springs and Denver in 1917. The towns of Hugo and Flagler were electrified in 1920. Seibert and Stratton followed suit in 1921 and Arriba in 1922. Vona was probably electrified prior to incorporation in 1919. The town of Bethune had an innovative approach to turn off the town's lights in the 1920s. A wind-up alarm clock was used for the timer. When the alarm went off, the winder turned, releasing a small weight which caused a larger weight to drop, throwing the switch! Eventually Inland Utilities of Kansas City would provide electric service to the towns.

October 26, 1946, eleven organizers formed a corporation under the name, K.C. Co-op Electric Association (K.C. stood for Kit Carson County) and seven of those men became the first board of directors. An amendment was filed August 26, 1948 to change the name of the corporation to K.C. Electric Association. After 2 1/2 years and five tries to secure an REA loan, K.C. Electric Association purchased the municipal properties from Inland Utilities and broadened its territory from Kit Carson County to include all of Cheyenne County and a portion of Lincoln County. K.C.'s loan was \$3.575 million and the board of directors was increased from seven to nine. There were 1,650 metered consumers.

1950s

Rural sign-ups got underway in Cheyenne County and transmission and distribution lines were constructed. The Korean conflict caused material shortages. A two-way radio system was installed at Flagler. Power suppliers were switched from locally generated electricity to K.C. Electric, which purchased its power from the Big Thompson Project. Franchises and power distribution systems were acquired and purchased from the towns of Flagler and Kit Carson. This was a time for building a consolidated system and connecting rural consumers.

1960s

This decade was a time for improving service. REA approved a new loan for \$342,000, helping pay for the conversion of 62 miles of transmission line from single-pole to double-pole. This would reduce outages. Also with this loan, a new headquarters office and warehouse were built in Hugo at its current location. Appliance sales were implemented to help members obtain new electrical appliances, which helped build load. K.C. offered a time-payment plan, which helped members. Also, K.C. had a revolving loan fund for members wishing to convert their homes to electric heating. Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association built a new transmission line from Idalia to the Burlington area.

1970s

Appliance sales were discontinued. There were personality clashes between the editor of the Eastern Colorado Plainsman and K.C.'s Board of Directors which culminated in

a \$6 (six dollar) lawsuit. K.C. sponsored an annual queen pageant at annual meeting. Winners received prizes and an all-expense paid trip to the national contest in Las Vegas, Nevada. Approximately 2500 horsepower in irrigation and tail water pumps were added to the lines. 180 new customers signed on with increase sales of 4,480,000 kWh and \$84,070 more revenue comparing 1972 to 1971. Naturally, wholesale power costs were going up as well. Metered consumers in 1977 were 5,030 compared to 3,932 in 1972. Blizzards in 1977 and 1978 took their toll.

1980s

K.C. Electric partnered with Central Area Data Processing (CADP) in 1982 for improvements with data collecting and reporting of information. Services offered included the billing system, capital credit system, material inventory and work order system, general ledger, and payroll system. In 1987, a satellite dish was installed on the roof of the Hugo office to communicate with CADP's Mainframe computer in Missouri. A re-build of the line between Stratton and Vona took place. The line was originally built in 1922. There were 5,522 metered consumers

1990s

Solar power was used to provide power for stock tank wells. This remote photovoltaic (PV) energy was ideal where it was not feasible to construct power lines to a stock tank well. K.C. Electric received the Administrator's Award, given by Western Area Power Administration, for its excellence in promoting energy efficiency and cost effective renewable energy resources. K.C. Electric, the youngest electric cooperative in the state, turned 50 in 1996. REA changed its name to Rural Utilities Service (RUS). K.C. Electric upgraded to a new computer system in 1998.

2000s

John Huppert was appointed interim manager in 2000 and general manager in 2003. K.C. Electric converted the town of Hugo's 2,300 volt system to 14,400 volt. CADP became National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) and continues to be an innovative service of information technology.

2011-K.C. Electric was a pilot program for automated metering through Tantalus, but later installed Sensus meters.

2012-Lineman received iPads to charge material and staking became automated.

2014-K.C. Linemen received a safety award from Colorado Rural Electric Association for no lost-time injuries. Smart hub was a new feature on the website for members to access and manage their electric bills. K.C. Electric and Mountain View Electric negotiated a territory swap to clean up boundaries and prevent any issues with upgrading line. K.C. Electric hosted for the first time the 69th annual meeting of the Colorado Rural Electric Accountants Association. Events were held at both Stratton and Burlington and attendees enjoyed their trip to the high plains.

2015-Line material was ordered through an automated system.

2016- There are 6,491 metered consumers.