



October 2023

West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Electric News

October is National Cooperative Month!

Co-op building
popular with
everyone at
the state fair

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Members take home
some great prizes from
2023 annual meeting
PAGE 2

Incumbents retain
board positions, Allen
re-elected president
PAGE 3

Cooler fall weather can
contribute to outages
caused by animals
PAGE 6



2023 Annual Meeting Prize Winners	
Grand Prize \$500 Energy Credit Forrest Wrisinger	\$25 Energy Certificates Larry Brandt Daniel O'Holloren Ray Dorr Roger Deuschle James Royeton Larry Opfer George Transue Jr. Victor Mistele Margaret Wood Jason Hale Terry Mitchell Lawrence Turner
\$100 Energy Certificates Daniel Miller Andy Sevy Raymond Boosinger G.M. Galloway George Glecker	Boy's Bike with Helmet Brennen Nesbeth
\$50 Energy Certificates James Evans Karen Luehrman Don Boosinger Michael Friend John Olivia AJB Farms Dave Denfeld Randall Ring Robert Strate Charles Cole Darrin Tobias Niendick Bros.	Girl's Bike with Helmet Brooklyn Hazen
Fish-fry kit Steve Young	Air pods Brent Schubert Ava J.
	Stuffed Buddy Bears Evan Unruh Naomi Ward

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Headquarters:

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349

To report outages 24/7:

Call 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • or report outages at
www.westcentralelectric.coop under "View & Report Outages"

District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

General Manager:

Michael Newland

Board of Directors:

Densil Allen Jr., *President*; Clark Bredehoeft, *Vice-President*; Dale Jarman, *Treasurer*; Robert Simmons, *Secretary*; Stan Rhodes, *Asst. Secretary*; Richard Strobel, *Director*; Sandra Streit, *Director*; Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*; Colby Dowell, *Director*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

New GM Newland delivers his first state-of-the cooperative address

New General Manager Michael Newland delivered his first state-of-the-cooperative address during the Aug. 4 annual meeting. Following is the report he delivered to members that evening:

"As we look back on 2022, it was a year of growth, change and progress. Day in and day out, your West Central Electric board and employees remained focused on our mission of 'enhancing the quality of life for our members by providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in a professional manner.'



"Safe. Reliable. Affordable. Three words that have pretty simple meanings, yet are important enough that they provide the backbone of what holds your cooperative together and ensures that our members' needs are being met.

"For the past 84 years, West Central Electric and our electric cooperative system has been the constant that has made sure our members have safe, reliable, affordable electricity; that our members have a voice speaking up for them to our elected officials; and that our communities have yet another dedicated resource making sure they stay strong and viable.

Newland

"(The year) 2022 didn't come without its challenges – from supply chain delays on trucks and poles to inflationary price increases on the material and services needed to provide you with the level of electric service you have come to expect.

"In 2022, WCE continued to grow in members and miles, adding 272 new services and over 7 miles of line to our system. The growth has continued into 2023, where as of June 30, we have added 164 new services just this year, topping over 15,000 meters for the first time in WCE history.

"We continue to work on maintenance and system improvements to keep your electric system in good shape. WCE crews have been working primarily on new services, service upgrades, and pole changes. We also continue to invest in upgrading the needed infrastructure to serve you, as determined by our construction work plan. These improvements will help ensure that we have the needed capacity to serve the increased load over into the future.

"We continued our right-of-way maintenance programs. These programs are needed to reduce our outages due to trees or limbs falling or blowing into our lines. In 2022, we continued to use contractors for most of our tree trimming and brush spraying. If you live near the Columbus and Centerview substations you may have seen them out and about. While tree trimming and spraying is a never-ending process, your board remains committed to continuing to work to reduce your outages due to trees.

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ON THE COVER: Hadlee Bell, daughter of WCE members Mitchell and AshLand Bell, visits the MEC building at the Mo. State Fair.

Allen, Simmons, Strobel retain director positions Allen is re-elected board president

Three incumbents on the ballot were returned to their seats to serve three-year terms on West Central Electric's Board of Directors, during the 2023 annual meeting Aug. 4.

District 3 directors Robert Simmons and Richard Strobel both ran unopposed, and were elected by acclamation. Densil Allen Jr. defeated challenger Ralph Damon.

Election Results:

District 3 -- Robert Simmons unopposed/acclamation
Richard Strobel unopposed/acclamation

District 5 -- Densil Allen Jr. 370 votes
Ralph Damon 109 votes

At their re-organizational board meeting held immediately following the annual meeting, all officers retained their positions as voted on by the board. Allen Jr. of Knob Noster will remain as president; Clark Bredehoeft of Blackburn, will remain as vice president; Dale Jarman



Directors elected: (L-r) Densil Allen Jr., Robert Simmons and Richrd Strobel will serve the cooperative for the next three years.

of Holden will remain as treasurer, Simmons of Warrensburg will remain as secretary and Stan Rhodes of Corder will remain as assistant secretary.

Members gather at UCM for 2023 annual meeting

A total of 588 registered members and their guests enjoyed the traditional co-op barbecue dinner, informational booths and business meeting during West Central Electric Cooperative's 84th annual meeting Aug. 4 in Warrensburg. Total attendance was estimated at approximately 1,200.

Director Election

Incumbent Densil Allen Jr. won the District 5 spot with 370 votes to challenger Ralph Damon's 109. In District 3, Robert Simmons and Richard Strobel ran unopposed, and were elected by acclamation.

Other Meeting Highlights

Other highlights of the meeting included a presentation by Jim McCarty, editor emeritus of Rural Missouri magazine and special projects manager for the

Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. McCarty took on the persona of a prospective WCE member back in the days when rural folks were waiting for "the electric" to come. He spoke of WCE founders, how

they were instrumental in getting electricity to this area, and what people went through to make that happen.

Members also heard from 2023 Rural Electric Youth Tour delegate Serena Sartin, who spoke about rural electric cooperatives showing responsibility to their members. Sartin said electric cooperatives all across the nation work tirelessly to meet the demands of their fellow Americans.

"Through community service, environmental protections and affordable rates, Missouri electric cooperatives are demonstrating exactly what it means to be responsible for the well-being of their members," she said.

Members also heard an address on the state of the cooperative from General Manager Michael Newland, and a report from WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. (Both reports appear in this issue.)

In addition to the business meeting, members were able to visit informational booths by vendors such as NW Electric Power Cooperative, Johnson County Master Gardeners, Central Energy Audits, AECl and the Missouri Secretary of State's office. WCE linemen gave live demonstrations on electrical safety and how power outages are located and repaired. Board members of the WCE Operation RoundUp Foundation were on hand to give members more information on the program and show how the funds collected in the past year have been used to support various community programs throughout the service area.

Members were registered for prizes, including the grand prize, a \$500 energy credit (won by Forrest Wrisinger) and several energy certificates as well as other prizes. The childrens' grand prizes were bicycles and helmets, all of which were awarded at the end of the evening.



Sartin



Girl's bicycle and helmet winner Brooklynn Hazen.



Boy's bicycle and helmet winner Brennan Nesbitt

Allen's message to members:

Your electric cooperative is always here for you

During his traditional message to members gathered at West Central Electric Cooperative's annual meeting Aug. 4, WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. assured members their cooperative is always there for them. Following is the report he delivered to members that evening:



Densil Allen Jr.

"As your electric cooperative, we are always here for you. Day or night, rain or shine -- because that is what a cooperative does. There are no fancy gimmicks or payments to investors in faraway cities -- just you, us, and reliable, safe, affordable electricity. Your board of directors are your friends and neighbors, and friends and neighbors are there for each other. Always.

"That is not a statement we take lightly. Being there for you means being there for our communities. Supporting our local communities is something near

and dear to our hearts. We want to make life better for you; for us; for our cooperative. One of the ways we can do that is through programs like Operation RoundUp. In 6 years, this program has provided more than \$256,000 to fund 65 projects that have strengthened our local communities and provided funding opportunities for projects that might not have otherwise been completed. Thank you to those who are participating in Operation RoundUp.

"We are also there to provide energy efficiency information to our members to help you reduce your electric bill. Making safety information available to our members from the youngest students to the oldest farm-

ers, ensures that you get to enjoy the conveniences of having electricity with the knowledge to use it safely.

"Providing scholarships and leadership opportunities to students like those introduced tonight allows us to be there for our future generation.

"Being part of a cooperative means knowing we are all in this together;

"The comforting thing to me, not as president of the board of directors, but as a co-op member who pays the electric bill, is knowing that what I am paying to my cooperative is going to do more than just keep the lights on."

*WCE Board President
Densil Allen Jr.,*

and that is a great thing as we go into the future where many things are unknown. The comforting thing to me, not as president of the board of directors, but as a co-op member who pays the electric bill, is knowing that what I am paying to my cooperative is going to do more than just keep the lights on. As a member who participates in Operation RoundUp, I know it is also going to make my community a better place to live. I know that my dollars are going to help keep the electric system in good shape so my electricity is reliable. I know that I am not paying investors who have no ties to my community.

"I know that I am not paying any more than is absolutely necessary to keep my cooperative functioning like the well-oiled machine the founding members before all of us worked so hard to establish. I know that any profits go into the capital credits fund to be paid back to the members. I also know we have lobbyists in Washington, D.C. and Jefferson City letting our elected officials know our members can't afford exorbitant electric rates, and ensuring that our members have a voice when those officials consider legislation that could affect our members' right and access to reliable and affordable electricity.

"Knowing all of these things makes it a privilege to be able to pay my electric bill, because I know my cooperative has my best interests at heart. Thank you for investing your time in your local electric cooperative and spending the evening with us at your annual meeting."



The AECI Virtual Reality booth was a hit with all ages during the WCE annual meeting. (Top photo) Gunner Hale, 10, son of Jason and Kristin Hale of Lone Jack. (Right photo) Robert Rainey of Knob Noster.



New GM Newland delivers his first state-of-the cooperative address

From page 2

"As your cooperative employees and board continue to serve you, we never lose sight of the fact that you have placed your trust in us. You trust us to make sure we take care of your electric system. When there are disasters, you trust us to get your service back up and running quickly, whether it means doing it all ourselves, or calling in employees from other cooperatives to help. You trust us to be good stewards of your money.

"It seems that in the past few years, everything has gotten expensive. From the cost of gasoline to the price of a dozen eggs, we are forced to look a little closer at everything we need to buy. It is no different in the electric industry. Just as the cost of necessities like gasoline and eggs have increased, so has the cost of the fuels required to produce your electricity, and the cost of the equipment needed to keep your electric system running. Although, we have been able to absorb this inflation for the past couple of years, we are faced with rising costs of wholesale power, which is the single largest expense West Central Electric incurs, making up almost 60% of total expenses. However, the time has come that we must look into our rates to ensure we are financially responsible to continue to provide you with the level of reliability and service your families need for your daily lives. We don't foresee having to initiate that increase until the spring of 2024 and we will share more information in the coming months as we work with our consultants.

"Although cost increases in fuels, equipment and wholesale power are beyond our control, you can trust that the board you have elected to ensure the strength and financial stability of your cooperative has done an excellent job. They have been able to keep your rates as low

as possible while still providing the level of reliability you deserve and depend on.

"I am pleased to report that your board approved paying back more than one and a half million dollars (\$1.5 million) in capital credits this year. If you were a member during 2003 and 2004, there should have been a credit on your most recent bill. To date, WCE has returned over \$32 million dollars of capital credits back to our members.

"Since we met last year, you may have noticed several new faces as many of our long-time employees have moved into retirement, but the employees who have replaced them have just as big of hearts for serving our members. Employees, please stand and raise your hand so everyone can see you.

"These are the people you pass on the road as they're working on your lines or on the other end of the phone when you call in, the people working endless hours to restore your power to make sure we keep the lights on. Let's give them a big round of applause.

"Also, I want to recognize your board of directors. Directors, please stand and raise your hand so everyone can see you. Your Directors remain committed to their position by staying educated and informed on an ever-changing environment in the utility industry. They take their jobs very seriously and always based their decisions on how it will affect our members. Let's give them a big round of applause.

"So, as we look into the future, you can be sure that the team you see here tonight is 100 percent dedicated to staying consistent to our now 84-year-old mission: providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity while faithfully serving our members."



(Far left) Lineman Johnny Sullins shows members an extendo. (Near left) Line intern Drew Schmidt presents Forrest Wrisinger with his grand prize \$500 energy certificate. (Top) Brenda and Floyd Nieweg of Napoleon wait for the business meeting to begin.

Weather isn't the only cause of outages

Animals could be to blame for fall outages

As the cool and crisp fall air brings a welcome change for many, with the decrease in temperatures comes the inevitable increase of outages and blinks caused by animals.

Most people attribute outages to storms and high winds, but there doesn't have to be a cloud in the sky or a storm in the air to cause a power outage. Although a number of outages may be caused by high winds blowing tree limbs onto lines, the culprit in the fall of the year is likely to be of the furry or feathery variety.

"When the air begins to turn cold, a lot of times we see an increase in the amount of outages on our system that we can attribute to animals," Operations Manager Scott Gard said.

The number of outages attributed to animals can increase in the fall when squirrels begin preparing for winter. Squirrels and other animals climb on equipment, such as transformers and fuses, and the equipment shuts down in order to protect the rest of the system.

"The reason these instances sometimes tend to increase in the fall is because the transformers put off heat," Gard said. "Squirrels, raccoons and other animals will climb onto the transformers for warmth, and they get into places they shouldn't be. Before you know it, there is a power outage."

Animals on the transformers can also cause the monotonous "blinks" that keep the lights off only long enough to force you to have to set

every digital clock in the house.

Your cooperative is doing what it can to reduce outages attributed to animals by installing insulated "bird wire" and wildlife protection devices to prevent animals and birds from making contact with electrical equipment. These devices are not only meant to protect the electrical system, but also the birds and animals.

Your cooperative is working hard to reduce the number of outages experienced by our members.

When calling in an electrical outage, please be sure to have your map number available. It can be found under the "service information" section located in the center of your billing statement. Outages may be reported at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942, or on our website at www.westcentralelectric.coop.



2023 Missouri State Fair



WCE board member Richard Strobel stopped by the co-op building during the state fair to say hello.



WCE District Operations Supervisor Matt Schellman talked with fairgoers at the Missouri Electric Cooperatives Building during the Missouri State Fair in August. The display showing what linemen wear was a popular exhibit.



Colton Wilcox, son of WCE members Brian and Jamie Wilcox of Oak Grove, and Leah Krekel, daughter of Mark and Brooke Krekel of Oak Grove place pins in the map showing where visitors to the co-op building are from.



(Top) The Missouri Electric Cooperatives Speedway is always a hit with fairgoers at the Missouri State Fair. (Bottom) WCE employee Pam Fuenfhausen lines up cars for the next race.

FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held July 27, 2023

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, July 27, 2023, pursuant to the bylaws of the cooperative and previous resolution of the board of directors. The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Robert Simmons, secretary of the cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Allen, Simmons, Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman, Jeremy Ahmann and Colby Dowell. Also present were General Manager Michael Newland and cooperative attorney Sheri Smiley.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of June 29, 2023; expenditures for the month of June 2023; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoeflicker presented the June 2023 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. She reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. She also gave the investment report. She presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios. Capital Credit retirements, the 10-year forecast being done by CFC and the KRTA's were available in the board packet.

Operations Report: Operations Manager Scott Gard provided a report to supplement the written Operations Report. He reported on crews and new employees. He also reported on fleet that a small bucket truck is set to be sold at an online auction. Outages, storm damage and how dispatch was handled for the 892 storm outages was reported on. A report was given on brush crews and right-of-way.

Safety and Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided a written Safety and Engineering Report and Newland supplemented it. Safety meetings were reported on. The Missouri State Highway Patrol showed the linemen what officers look for when doing roadside inspections with the mobile scale truck. Crew inspections were held and no safety violations were observed. An engineering staking department report was given. Make-ready work and large transformers were discussed. He gave a report on lost-time accident numbers.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided a report to supplement his written Member Services Report. His report included Operation RoundUp enrollment. He reported on Youth Tour and the annual meeting. A net metering report was given. Vote-by-mail forms were reported on. Membership cards for members were reported on. He reported on rebates and chamber meetings he attended.

IT Report: IT Manager Tim Bowler gave an IT report. Email security was reported on. He is working on meter reprogramming. He attended an infrastructure meeting at AMEC.



DISCUSSION ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT

Newland provided information from Synergy that had been tabled in January. After board discussion, the consensus was to not proceed.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported that service awards and a new cooperative neighbor award will be given. Staff reports, the new editor of Rural Missouri, and legislation was reported on.

NW REPORT

Simmons and Newland reported on the NW meeting. They reported on the Lone Jack substation build, AECL facilities, and on airplanes that were interfering with the lines.

DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE REPORT

The directors who attended the conference gave a report.

ROUNDUP FOUNDATION REPORT

Streit gave a report and provided minutes. The foundation requested that the Member Services Department meet with them. Information was in the board packet for donations made.

ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Newland and Kim Lewis gave the report. An agenda was reviewed. Prizes and entertainment were discussed. Strobel attended Central Electric's meeting and reported on it.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley reported on legal matters.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. The Toth cost-of-service study was discussed and has been agreed to. A link was provided to David Tudor's testimony to Congress. The Lone Jack substation was discussed. A three-phase line extension policy was looked at and revisions will be brought back. A credit card limit policy was discussed and will be brought back next month for review. The Cobank Nominating Committee was discussed. An employee family BBQ was held at the Oak Grove location.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bredehoeft discussed voting for the AMEC director.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 12:05 p.m. and adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • June 2023

	This month	YTD 2023	YTD 2022
Revenue	\$2,601,325	\$16,574,605	\$16,705,049
Power Bill Expense	1,618,294	9,362,298	9,478,712
Operation & Maint. Expense	675,372	3,952,813	3,505,426
Depreciation Expense	223,870	1,333,089	1,261,369
Interest Expense	124,587	724,612	680,607
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,642,123	15,372,812	14,926,114
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(40,798)	1,201,793	1,778,935
Other Margins	21,240	140,585	96,561
TOTAL MARGINS	\$(19,558)	\$1,342,378	\$1,875,496

