

Electric News



Winter roads and power line safety

PAGE 7

**Scammers continue to
target co-op members**
Red flags to watch out for
page 3

Clearing the air
'Demand' and other
energy-use terms defined
page 4

All in a day's work
Follow our linemen as
they prep for the day
page 6

West Central Electric News
a news service for the members of



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: 1-855-939-3639
(*please note this new number)

To report outages 24/7

Call 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803
Report online at
www.westcentralelectric.coop under
"Report Outage"

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*
Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*
Colby Dowell, *Director*
Elizabeth Houtsma, *Director*

*This institution is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.*

From the manager's desk

Seven Cooperative Principles govern how we do business every day

The idea of gaining more by cooperating with others is nothing new. In fact, cooperative roots can be traced back to the first modern co-op formed in Rochdale, England in 1844. However, what makes cooperatives different is that we are focused on people, not profits.

Electric cooperatives serve more than 42 million people and power more than 22 million businesses, homes, schools and farms in 48 states. We are owned by those we serve, and like all cooperatives, we adhere to a set of Seven Cooperative Principles that sets us apart, governs how we operate, and puts the needs of our members first.

1. Open and Voluntary Membership

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (directors/trustees) are elected among the membership and are accountable to them. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions



Michael Newland
General Manager



with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs, and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, help boost cooperative understanding.

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

By working together through local, national, regional and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs.

7. Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

These Seven Cooperative Principles are not just words on our wall, but a blueprint for how we run our business each and every day -- in the best interest of our members.

Net Metering & Interconnection Act

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source.

Our policy, agreement and application reflect the standards set by the Net Metering and Easy Connection Act.

For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.



Scammers are targeting our co-op members

West Central Electric has received several calls within the last few months regarding scammers targeting them on the weekends. Some of these scammers claim to represent solar companies, but fail to provide a company name or any printed information regarding solar installation.

“Members have reported being asked to take a photo of their electric bill and provide the last four numbers of their social security number,” Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer said. “Never provide any personal information, and never let someone take a copy or a photo of your bill. This gives them your personal account information with the cooperative. Providing all or part of your social security number gives scammers a way to fraudulently verify your account information.”

WCE will never visit you at your home and ask for personal information -- we already have your account information. If anyone knocks on your door claiming to represent the cooperative, contact us immediately for verification. If it is after hours or on the weekend, ask the person for their contact information and tell them you will get back with them after you have verified with the cooperative.

West Central Electric has received several calls within the last few months regarding scammers targeting them on the weekends. Some of these scammers claim to represent solar companies, but fail to provide

Here are the RED FLAGS:

- Someone asks for a photo of your electric bill (NO WAY! That's private info!)

- They ask for the last 4 digits of your social security number (BIG NO!)

REMEMBER:

- We will NEVER knock on your door asking for personal information.

- WCE does NOT sell solar.

- Verify anyone claiming to represent us by contacting the cooperative directly. Stay safe!

Some members have reported two men in a large black 4WD Chevy truck claiming to represent WCE and Everyg.

“Some of these contacts may be from actual solar companies, however, they are high-pressure and demanding, and not always truthful regarding who they represent, cost to the member, and how members would benefit from installing solar,” Schlotzhauer said. “Before signing up with any solar company, contact us to discuss solar and WCE’s solar program.”

Monthly newsletter now appears in your email

For those who would rather read the monthly West Central Electric News on their cell phone or other devices, the newsletter link is now being emailed to members on or about the first of the month.

Members who have provided the cooperative with their email address will receive a monthly notification that the newsletter is “now available” along with a link to that month’s newsletter on our website.

“We know our members are busy, and it is not always convenient to pick up the paper copy of the newsletter, but hopefully providing the link to members via email will allow them to read it anywhere at any time they choose,” Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander said.

If you have not received a notification and a link via email, please contact the cooperative to provide or verify your correct email.

To report an outage...

Online:

Members may report power outages online at www.westcentralelectric.coop. Click on the tab at the top titled “Report Outage” and enter your account number or phone number; or on the SmartHub app.

By phone:

You may also call to report outages by phone. Call 1-800-491-3803 -- 24 hrs. a day, or Higginsville at 816-565-4942.

Before calling, have you:

- 1) Checked your fuses or multibreakers?
- 2) Checked with your neighbors to see if they are out of electricity?

When calling, have this information ready:

- A) Your name, or the name your service is under;
- B) Your account number (look on your latest bill to find it) or your map location number. (This is the number the co-op uses to locate where you live. It was given to you when you signed up for membership.) Please keep both numbers by your phone for quicker service.

Tracking Outages

Outage information may be tracked on our website, and periodic updates will be posted on our facebook page. PLEASE DO NOT REPORT OUTAGES ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE as they have a good chance of getting missed. If you have internet service, go to the website to report instead.

Chances are, you have heard a lot of terms flying around lately regarding electric rates and energy usage.



What is demand?

Demand is the highest amount of electricity your household uses at one time.

What is 'time of use'?

Time of use is when electricity is billed at different amounts depending on the time of day it is being used.

Is WCE implementing demand or time of use?

At this time WCE is **NOT** implementing either of these changes to the way rates are figured or charged. In the future, your board may determine it is in the best financial interest of the co-op to make a change. For now, however, it is in our members' best interest to educate you on what these are, why they are being discussed, and how being aware of how and when you use electricity can cost or save you money.

Why is my co-op giving me this information if we are not going to those rates now?

The **5th COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE: Education, training and information!** We want to give you as much information on how you can save money on your electric bill, and being mindful of how and when you are using electricity is where to start. If you choose to implement a few changes in your electric usage habits, you could save some money on your electric bill. It is **ALL ABOUT** being mindful of your energy usage.

Do I have to change my lifestyle?

No, but doing so could save you money on your electric bill, and could also help your co-op avoid setting peaks, which is one of the things that causes the cost of power to increase.

If I want to make some changes, where do I start?

- Don't "TOWER YOUR POWER." Spread your power usage out over a greater amount of time.
- Instead of running several major appliances at once, stagger them throughout the day or evening.
- Remember some things run constantly or nearly so. Think refrigerator, furnace, a/c. Don't add so many things to the load that is already there.
- Change your thermostat a few degrees, close blinds during hot summer days and open them during sunny winter days, and set your water heater temperature a few degrees cooler. Basically it is about good old-fashioned CONSERVATION.

Why is 'demand' a more fair way to figure rates?

It's like sharing a pizza and splitting the cost evenly between everyone eating the pizza. Everyone pays the same amount, but one person may eat a lot more than another. This way of figuring rates ensures that everyone pays for what they actually use, instead of letting one person pay for a bunch of pizza they didn't eat. Some members use more electricity at one time than others. By paying on a DEMAND scale, the member who doesn't use as much electricity at one time does not have to subsidize the ones who do.



YOUTH TOUR & CYCLE 2025



• Youth Tour 2025

- June 15-21, 2025
- 3-5 local students will win (depending on number of entries)
- More than 100 students from Missouri and more than 1,800 students from across the nation will attend.
- You will visit memorials, the Capitol Building, the Smithsonian Museums, cruise the Potomac at night, meet and visit with your senators and representatives, and make valuable connections!



Contest Details:

High school juniors who attend a school in the West Central Electric service area, or whose parents or legal guardians are current members of WCE are eligible.

How do I enter?

Submit a 600-word, typed essay on the following topic:

“The Cooperative Difference”

Essays should focus on what makes cooperatives different from other forms of business.

Information Packets Available Here:

westcentralelectric.coop
under “Youth Programs”

DEADLINE: 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7, 2025

• CYCLE 2025

Cooperative Youth Conference & Leadership Experience

- July 15-18, 2025
- 5 local students will win
- More than 100 students from Mo.
- Top-notch speakers and hands-on leadership activities including the chance to write and debate your own bill on the floor of the Mo. House of Representatives
- Day trip to St. Louis
- Meet other young leaders from around the state, and make valuable connections!



All in a day's work

"Ordering materials from our supplier, working with maintenance to make sure the fleet is up and going for the day, and making sure members are ready for work to be done at their location are how the early mornings usually go," Operations Manager Scott Gard said.

Prepping for the day's work starts much earlier than 8 a.m. at West Central Electric. Operations Manager Scott Gard starts most days at 6:30 a.m. mapping out jobs and assigning crews to those jobs among other things.

"Ordering materials from our supplier, working with maintenance to make sure the fleet is up and going for the day, and making sure members are ready for work to be done at their location are how the early mornings go," Operations Manager Scott Gard said.

Once the line crews arrive, the first part of the day involves a discussion on the day's assignments and which crews will be where on the system, in addition to any important details for specific jobs. Crews are then dismissed to load equipment, inspect trucks, check their service orders and look over their personal protective equipment before heading out.

"It is an involved process even before we actually get out on the system," said District Operations Supervisor Matt Schellman. "Making sure we are running as safely and efficiently as possible takes plenty of preparation, but it results in getting the job done so we can make sure our members are taken care of."



Line Foreman Billy Mackie



Lineman Cabot Long



Start the New Year Right with Energy Savings



Maximize the heat you've got.

Look around each room and make sure the vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or other objects. If the floors feel cold even when the room is warm, put down area rugs for additional warmth. Open curtains and blinds to let the sunshine in and close them at night.

Source: NRECA

Stay Safe on Winter Roads

Winter months can bring snow, ice, and windy conditions, which create additional hazards for drivers. Should an accident occur, it is important to be prepared. Automobile crashes always present danger, but when electricity is involved, the decisions made in the moments after the accident are especially crucial.

Due to the potential for a winter storm to bring down power lines, indi-

Keep in mind that a downed line does not need to be sparking to be energized. It is best to assume all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous.

viduals should only venture outside if absolutely necessary. Slow down when driving in icy conditions, and always keep your eyes on the road to look out for hazardous conditions or downed power lines. Also watch for debris near downed poles and lines, as it may be energized as well.

If you see a car in an accident with a power pole, always remember to keep your distance from the vehicle and all electrical equipment that has been damaged. Instruct those in the car to stay inside until the power has been shut off.

If you must exit the vehicle because it is on fire, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the



photo courtesy of Tory Tedder-Loffland, OK Co-op

same time. Keeping your feet together, shuffle to safety. Doing this will ensure that you will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.

Keep in mind that a downed line does not need to be sparking to be energized. It is best to assume all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous.

Never drive over a downed line because that could pull down the pole and other equipment, causing additional hazards. If you see a downed line, do not get out of your car. The safest place is inside the vehicle. Contact 911 to have the utility notified immediately.

To prepare for winter travel, perform regular maintenance on your car to check that batteries are charged, tires have sufficient tread, and windshield wipers are in working order.

In case of an emergency, pack a kit that includes blankets, flares, a flashlight, and a window scraper. If you are stranded in your car after an accident, watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia. Do not stay in one position for too long, stay awake, and do not overexert yourself as this could put strain on your heart.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

From the WCE boardroom

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Oct. 24, 2024

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 24, 2024, 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. Attorney Sheri Smiley caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Dale Jarman, Robert Simmons, Jeremy Ahmann, Colby Dowell and Elizabeth Houtsma. Also present was General Manager Michael Newland.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Sept. 26, 2024; expenditures for the month of September 2024; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following September reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoeflicker presented the September 2024 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. She reported on the impact a large load has. She reported on interest rates, 990's and the RoundUp review.

Kevin Kelso, CPA, will prepare the final tax return for West Central Services and complete the required NRECA Participant Review.

RUS LOAN APPLICATION

Newland and Hoeflicker presented the requested loan amount for 35 years. They reviewed the summary of work projects. Loan proceeds will only be drawn down when approved by the board.

Operations Report

Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written Operations Report. He reported on crews, and outages and causes for the month. He gave a mechanic and fleet report and reported a large bucket truck will be delivered in 2025. Spray bids are going out. Eight linemen went to Georgia to help with the hurricane damage. The process for FEMA reimbursement was discussed. He discussed tree trimming and cutting dangerous trees due to potential fire liability and reliability. The co-op's policy on tree trimming was discussed. He gave a brush and right-of-way report.

Safety and Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. As of Sept. 30, employees have worked 698 days without a lost-time accident. Co-op employees drove a total of 43,058 miles as of the end of September without a serious accident. He reported on safety meeting presentations, including sub-station safety and hearing protection. He gave an engineering/staking report. He provided a construction, retirement, maintenance and operations report. Potential new pole specifications were reported on. Work order inspections were discussed.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer



provided his written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and RoundUp updates, the 2025 Youth Tour and CYCLE updates, trick-or-treat events attended, the monthly newsletter to the membership by emails, incentive rebates, and chamber meetings attended.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave the AMEC report. He gave a department report, discussed the tax exemption bill and the work being done to interpret it, and gave an AECI report.

AMEC ANNUAL MEETING

All board members who attended gave a report on the speakers.

ROUND UP FOUNDATION REPORT

A report on donations made was in the board packet for review.

N.W. ELECTRIC REPORT

Newland and Simmons reported on the October board meeting. They reported on deferred revenue, a rate increase and gave a Turney gas plant update.

NRECA REGION 8-10 REPORT

The board members who attended the NRECA meeting gave an update on the speakers, including a potential new AI policy and energy generation.

LEGAL REPORT

Attorney Sheri Smiley gave the legal report for the month.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. The AMECPAC request was reviewed. A motion was made and passed to donate \$2,000.00 for 2025. Scholarships for linemen were discussed. There have been 2 requests for scholarships. The scholarships are paid from discounted estates. A motion was made and passed to put one scholarship in the budget for \$2,500 a semester (or \$5,000 a year) for two years. After-hours dispatch at Plate-Clay Electric Cooperative is discontinuing. CRC is a call center out of Kirksville, Mo. that has been recommended. The costs of the call center were discussed. A motion was made and passed to use CRC as the after-hours dispatch center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 11:25 a.m. and adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT

September 2024 Statement of Operations

	This month	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Revenue	\$3,217,472	\$28,117,238	\$25,062,960
Power Bill Expense	1,919,284	17,011,217	14,397,113
Operation & Maintenance Expense	718,834	6,563,528	5,818,192
Depreciation Expense	213,539	1,887,523	2,009,147
Interest Expense	132,239	1,195,759	1,101,053
Total cost of Service (Total Expenses)	2,983,896	26,658,027	23,325,505
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	233,576	1,459,211	1,737,455
Other Margins	45,422	269,097	319,540
TOTAL MARGINS	\$278,998	\$1,728,308	\$2,056,995