



Youth Tour & CYCLE

2026



Information Packet

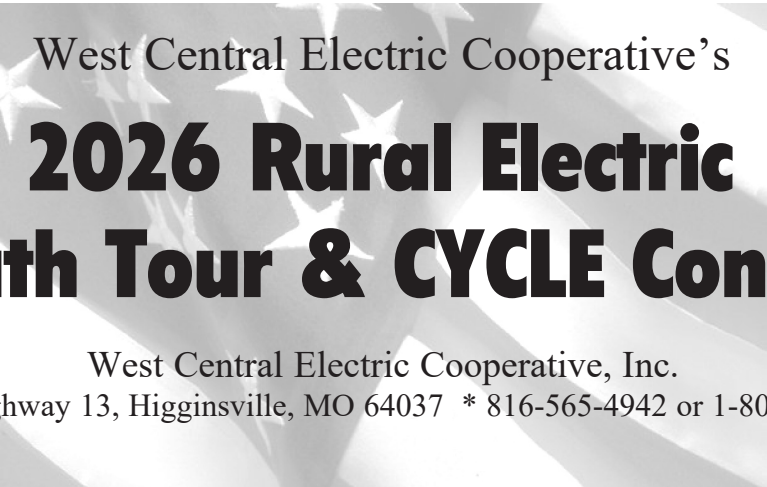


2026 Rural Electric Youth Tour sponsored by:



West Central Electric
Cooperative, Inc.
Higginsville, MO 64037





West Central Electric Cooperative's

2026 Rural Electric Youth Tour & CYCLE Contest

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.
7867 S. Highway 13, Higginsville, MO 64037 * 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

Dear Student,

Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Rural Electric Youth Tour and CYCLE essay contest and the trips to Washington, D.C and Jefferson City.

This packet contains a list of contest details, and various sections of information which should help you write a winning essay. Information is also available from several websites, addresses for which you will find on the Contest Details sheet, or on the WCE website at www.westcentralelectric.coop. There are also links to various cooperative organizations such as Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI), Members First, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), etc.

The essay topic is listed on the Contest Details sheet. Please follow the directions listed on the Contest Details sheet carefully.

The top 8-10 finalists (number of finalists depends on the number of entries received) in the written portion of the competition will present their essays during an oral competition in Higginsville on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. Following the oral competition, we will name three or four winners (depending on the number of essays received) who will receive the all-expense-paid trips to the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. This year's Youth Tour trip is June 14-20, 2026. The five runners-up will receive an all-expense paid trip to the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience (CYCLE), a leadership conference in Jefferson City scheduled for July 14-17, 2026.

Again, thank you for your interest in the Rural Electric Youth Tour and CYCLE. Good luck writing your essay, and we hope to see you in Higginsville on April 8, 2026 for the oral competition and reception!

Sincerely,

Heather Hoflander, Communications Specialist
Youth Tour Coordinator

West Central Electric Cooperative's

2026 Rural Electric Youth Tour & CYCLE Contest

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.
7867 S. Highway 13, Higginsville, MO 64037 * 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

Contest Details

The Topic: Students will write an essay on ONE of the following topics:
"How my electric cooperative has made (or is making) a difference in my community"
"How my electric cooperative has made (or is making) a difference in my school"
"How my electric cooperative can make (or is making) a difference in my/my family's life"

As a MEMBER-OWNED, NOT-FOR-PROFIT electric cooperative, we are intentionally different. Cooperatives are focused on PEOPLE, not PROFITS. One of the most important missions of cooperatives is to make their local communities a better place for you to live. Your essay should focus on how cooperatives make a difference.

Examples:

"How my electric cooperative has made (or is making) a difference in my community"

Discuss projects in your community that WCE has helped fund through Operation RoundUp (park and rec equipment and facilities, senior centers, food pantries, fairground upgrades, Big Brothers Big Sisters program, clothes closets, 4-H, Scouts); cooperative employees who volunteer as 4-H leaders; WCE helping to hang banners at the local veterans home; handing out lighted trinkets at Halloween for visibility of kids; helping fund local 4-H awards banquet & leader pins, etc.

"How my electric cooperative has made (or is making) a difference in my school"

School projects funded through Operation RoundUp (band instruments, computer programs, backsnack programs, books, PE equipment); donating to After Prom, Project Grad and other events; providing scholarships and opportunities like Youth Tour and CYCLE; giving electrical safety demonstrations; bringing equipment like bucket trucks out to show kids what we do; attending STEM and STEAM events; supporting FFA; helping promote the T-Mobile Friday Night Lights contest, etc.

"How my electric cooperative can make (or is making) a difference in my/my family's life"

Returning capital credits (member equity--money back) to members; following legislation and talking to elected officials to make sure they understand what rural members need; providing you with a scholarship; Youth Tour and CYCLE opportunities; working for our members, not to make a profit; providing safe, reliable, affordable electricity; quickly repairing outages rain or shine, sleet or snow, day or night; taking care of the environment, etc.

***Essays that do not stick to the topic, follow the guidelines, are deemed inappropriate, or are written with AI will be immediately disqualified.**

Assignment: Contestants should submit a 600-word, typed, creative essay on the above topic. On a separate cover sheet, include the following information: Your name and address, telephone number, parents' names, school, teacher's name and title of your essay. Also include the title at the TOP OF PAGE ONE of your essay. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON ANY PART OF THE ESSAY -- COVER SHEET ONLY

Resources: This packet contains research material which should provide you with the needed resources to write your essay. However, feel free to add other sources for your essay if you wish. You are also welcome to interview someone, or use any other additional sources you find helpful. Please include them at the end of the essay in a works cited page. Some websites which you may find helpful:

- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (www.nreca.org)
- Members First (www.membersfirst.coop)
- West Central Electric Co-op (www.westcentralelectric.coop)
- Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (www.aeci.org)

Mail essays to:	Heather Hoflander, Youth Tour Coordinator West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. 7867 S. Highway 13 Higginsville, MO 64037 <i>(Please coordinate this with your teacher so he or she can mail all of your school's essays together.)</i>						
Entry Deadline:	Essays must be received in the Higginsville office no later than 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6, 2026.						
How essays will be scored:	There are 100 points possible based on five areas: <table> <tr> <td>1. Knowledge of subject</td><td>4. Composition</td></tr> <tr> <td>2. Originality</td><td>5. Grammar, spelling & neatness</td></tr> <tr> <td>3. Content (ability to adhere to topic)</td><td></td></tr> </table> Essays will be blind-judged. (Before being sent to the judges, your cover page will be omitted so judges will not know who the writer is, what school the writer attends, etc.) Essays will be judged by other Youth Tour coordinators from around the state. *Please note that essays which do not adhere to the assigned topics will be disqualified and will not be sent to the written judges. WCE and contest judges reserve the right to disqualify any essay that is deemed inappropriate or that fails to accurately reflect the cooperative message.	1. Knowledge of subject	4. Composition	2. Originality	5. Grammar, spelling & neatness	3. Content (ability to adhere to topic)	
1. Knowledge of subject	4. Composition						
2. Originality	5. Grammar, spelling & neatness						
3. Content (ability to adhere to topic)							
How do I become a finalist?	After all essays are turned in, they will be given to three written judges who will read and judge each essay. After each judge assigns each essay a score, the three scores will be combined for a final written score. The top eight (or more depending on number of essays received) final written scores will comprise the list of finalists. Each finalist will then be invited to present their essay before another panel of three oral judges at 7 p.m. Wed., April 8, 2026 at West Central Electric's headquarters office in Higginsville. Family members, teachers and principals will be invited to attend the evening's event, along with members of West Central's board of directors.						
How the oral judges score finalists:	There are 100 points possible from three oral judges. Scores are based on five areas: <table> <tr> <td>1. Speaking ability</td><td>4. Originality</td></tr> <tr> <td>2. Knowledge of subject</td><td>5. Presentation of self</td></tr> <tr> <td>3. Content (ability to adhere to topic)</td><td></td></tr> </table>	1. Speaking ability	4. Originality	2. Knowledge of subject	5. Presentation of self	3. Content (ability to adhere to topic)	
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Who are the oral judges?	Oral judges are selected from the employee pools of other electric cooperatives or from area communities. Oral judges may include other Youth Tour coordinators or employees from other cooperatives, Youth Tour alumni, etc.						
How the winners are chosen:	Each finalist's combined written score will be added to each of the three oral judges' scores for a final contest score. The winners will be announced that evening as West Central's delegates and the winners of the trip to Washington, D.C. June 14-20, 2026. <i>*We will send at least three delegates to D.C. with a potential of five, depending on the number of essays received.</i>						
Five finalists will win a trip to CYCLE:	Five students will also be named winners of a trip to Jefferson City for the cooperative-sponsored "Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience" (CYCLE), a 4-day leadership conference, is scheduled for July 14-17, 2026. *If you are selected as a finalist, you are expected to attend which-ever trip you win. If you know that you will not be able to attend the D.C trip, please let us know ASAP, as we can swap places among the winners if necessary. If you are chosen as a finalist and know you will not be able to attend either trip, please notify us immediately so we can give the next person in line your place in the finals and a chance at one of the two trips. Don't cheat someone else out of the experience!						
Do I have to be in an organized high school class to enter?	No. You may enter this contest on your own by following the procedures on this sheet. There have been several independent entries (including home school students) over the years who have made the finals and won the trips to Washington, D.C. and Jefferson City.						



West Central Electric Cooperative's

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Please provide us with the following information to be used if you are selected as a finalist. This information will be used for the finalist reception program, to introduce you if you are selected as a finalist, and for a news release if you are selected as a finalist. **THIS INFORMATION SHEET MUST ACCOMPANY YOUR ESSAY.**

Name:

Age:

Parents:

Address:

Email address (that you **WILL CHECK** on a regular basis):

BEST Telephone number to call or text you:

School:

Teacher:

School activities in which you participate:

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.
MEDIA RELEASE FORM

I understand that through my participation in the West Central Electric Cooperative Rural Electric Youth Tour competition, my name, image and information provided by me to the cooperative may be used in various forms of media (print, video, web, etc.) while reporting and promoting information about the Youth Tour competition.

I hereby consent and authorize the use of my image and information by West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. and anyone authorized by West Central Electric Cooperative.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature of parent or guardian (if minor): _____

*Please include this form with your essay entry.

Essay and Oral Presentation Scoring

Written Essay (100 points possible)

Knowledge of Subject	30 points
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(Demonstrates a basic understanding of the Rural Electric program as it relates to his or her chosen topic.)

Originality	30 points
--------------------	------------------

(Essay shows thought beyond the facts given in the resource packet, not just a regurgitation of the materials provided.)

Content (ability to adhere to topic)	20 points
---	------------------

(Essay clearly elaborates on the topic chosen with facts to back up the writer's opinions.)

Composition	10 points
--------------------	------------------

(Essay is composed in an organized format, flows well, and has good transitions.)

Grammar, Spelling and Neatness	10 points
---------------------------------------	------------------

(Words, sentences and paragraphs follow the standard rules of grammar; words are spelled correctly, and essay is typed or computer-generated without messy corrections.)

Oral Presentation (100 points possible)

Speaking Ability	30 points
-------------------------	------------------

(Student is able to speak clearly, has eye contact and expression, speaks rather than recites.)

Knowledge of Subject	20 points
-----------------------------	------------------

(Demonstrates a basic understanding of the Rural Electric program as it relates to the chosen topic.)

Content (ability to adhere to topic)	20 points
---	------------------

(Essay clearly elaborates on the topic chosen with facts to back up the writer's opinions.)

Originality	20 points
--------------------	------------------

(Essay shows thought beyond the regurgitation of facts from sources provided.)

Presentation of self	10 points
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(Neat appearance, demonstrates a positive attitude and poise, seems excited to be a part of the contest, and exhibits a strong desire to be chosen as a delegate for the Rural Electric Youth Tour.)

Explaining Cooperatives

What is a cooperative?

With the help of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who established the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, friends and neighbors banded together to create a new kind of electric utility, where the voice of every person made a difference. Electric cooperatives brought electric power to the rural areas when no one else would. Today, America's electric cooperatives provide much more than competitively-priced, reliable energy. They are committed to improving the quality of life in their communities.

Electric cooperatives are locally-owned and operated businesses established to supply electricity to their member-owners. They are owned by the people who use the power the co-op provides, so its customers are also its owners. They are committed to putting their consumers first, and being responsive to local needs. Electric co-ops are governed by a board of directors elected from among the membership. Any member may run for the board, and all members are asked to participate in an annual membership meeting at which board members are elected.

Who is West Central Electric Cooperative?

A member-owned not-for-profit cooperative, West Central Electric Cooperative was formed in 1939 to bring electricity to rural west central Missouri. Rural Missourians began the co-op when existing utilities believed that energizing the countryside wasn't a profitable venture. There are 40 rural electric cooperatives in the state of Missouri. WCE now provides power to more than 14,800 meters through more than 2,500 miles of line in five counties, including Lafayette, Johnson, Eastern Jackson and a small part of Cass and Pettis counties. The company's headquarters is located in Higginsville, Missouri, with a branch office in Oak Grove.

West Central Electric operates as a cooperative system which is regulated by a set of bylaws. This means that when someone signs up for service, they become a member, and therefore a part owner of the cooperative. A board of directors is elected from among the members, and the board meets monthly to make decisions concerning the cooperative's business. Members of the cooperative have an equal vote on all amendments, bylaws and directors.

What is member equity (capital credits)?

As a member of West Central Electric Cooperative, this is your business. While other electric consumers are paying some huge corporation for their electricity, WCE members are basically paying themselves for their own electricity.

After operating expenses for the co-op are met each year, any funds (profits) that remain are assigned to the members in the form of member equity (or capital credit allocations) which are your share of the amount paid for actual electric service, based on the cost of your electricity for the year. Capital credits are the cooperative's equity. They make it possible to secure loans and maintain facilities and services. When the equity level is high enough, the board of directors authorizes the disbursement of capital credits.

As of Dec. 2024, West Central Electric has repaid more than \$41 million in member equity(capital credits) to its members!

What else do Electric Cooperatives do?

Obviously the number-one goal of a rural electric cooperative is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members. But that is just one of the ways electric cooperatives work for their member-owners.

Safety Programs--We offer several safety programs and demonstrations appropriate for all ages from preschool children to adults at schools, businesses, area 4-H meetings, businesses and community groups.

Rural Electric Youth Tour and CYCLE -- Each year, West Central Electric sends delegates to Washington, D.C. for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, and to Jefferson City for the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience known as CYCLE.

Scholarship Programs -- West Central offers three scholarship programs to students in our service area.

Energy Efficiency/Rebate Programs -- West Central Electric offers rebates to members who install energy-efficient appliances and provides its members with information on using electricity efficiently and easy steps they can take to reduce their energy consumption and therefore save money on their electric bills.

Commitment to Local Communities -- One of the core values of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is a commitment to their local communities. WCE donates both time and money to various community events and organizations. One of the cooperative's biggest areas of interest is area 4-H and FFA. The cooperative helps sponsor county 4-H and FFA fairs, and cooperative employees donate time to judge at area fairs, serve as 4-H project leaders and judge at area and district speech contests. The cooperative is also a sponsor of various school and community events throughout its service area, and co-op employees also serve on many different boards and leadership teams from chambers of commerce to economic development boards to coordinators of programs like CHOICES.

Operation RoundUp-- A grant program which provides funding for various community and school projects in the service area.

Looking out for our members

One of electric cooperatives' most important roles is looking out for our members. That takes many different forms from ensuring a safe, reliable and affordable power supply; to monitoring state and federal regulations that could affect cooperative members' electric rates and reliability of service; to being responsible stewards of the environment; to helping our members save money on their electric bills by producing and transmitting power at the lowest cost possible.

KEEPING TRACK OF LEGISLATION AFFECTING OUR MEMBERS

AMEC's Government Relations Department represents the interests of Missouri's electric cooperatives and their members before the Missouri General Assembly, state agencies and the U.S. Congress. Their responsibilities include educating lawmakers about Missouri's electric cooperatives, monitoring legislation which affects co-ops and their members and influencing legislation when necessary. The department also works closely with regulators and other state officials.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Our focus on serving members drives us to be good stewards of the environment and of our members' resources. We've balanced our responsibilities to produce reliable, affordable, responsible electricity, and constantly seek ways to improve the efficiency and environmental performance of our units at our power plants.

Associated Electric Cooperative and its members have invested more than \$1 billion since 1994 to improve air quality and care for our land and water resources, reducing nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury emissions. We have achieved national recognition for restoring land that today provides pasture, woodlands, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities. We've partnered to bring the first utility-scale wind farms to Missouri -- and we buy all the power from those farms, as well as farms in Oklahoma and Kansas.

AFFORDABILITY AND RELIABILITY

We understand ultimately, all costs are paid by our rural electric cooperative members. That drives us to innovate and find ways to provide reliable power in the most economical way. The goal of our three-tiered system of cooperatives is to deliver reliable electricity to cooperative member-consumers at the lowest cost possible. Associated and its six member-owners' integrated, high-voltage transmission system is a key resource for ensuring affordable, reliable power for members.

Associated ensures reliability with a balanced mix of generating and transmission assets including natural gas, reliable coal and alternative energy like wind and hydropower.



Always-available energy is key to keeping the lights on

Electric co-ops rely on a diverse suite of resources to reliably meet the energy needs of their local communities.

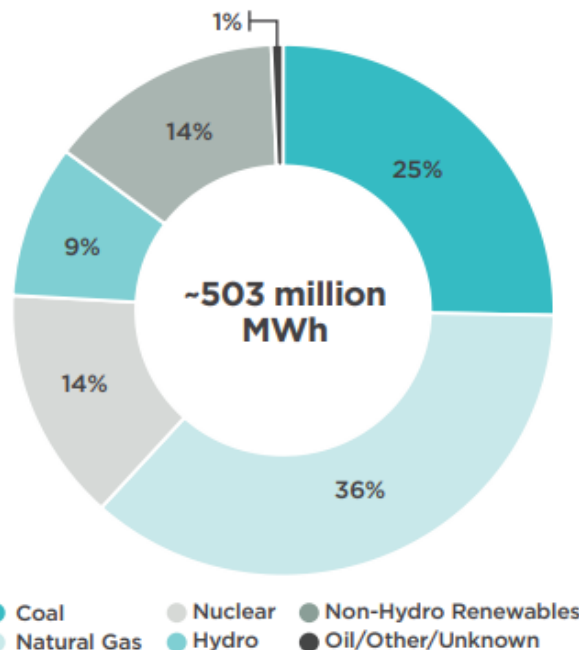
As of June 2025, electric co-ops have announced plans to add nearly 15 gigawatts of new generation capacity, including over 8.5 GW of natural gas generation. These projects will come online between 2025 and 2030, and additional announcements are expected.

The co-op fuel mix is anchored by always-available energy (85%) from coal, natural gas, nuclear and hydroelectric power, supplemented by non-hydro renewables (14%), primarily intermittent wind and solar.

Co-ops nationwide are also investing in battery storage technologies that can help address intermittency and improve reliability.

Co-ops thoughtfully explore all options, fuels and technologies as they work to meet their consumers' evolving energy needs.

2023 Co-op Retail Energy Mix



*Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: NRECA analysis*

Delivering reliable power at a cost families and businesses can afford

Share of Co-op Households With Annual Income Under \$35K

- 14%-20%
- 21%-25%
- 26%-30%
- 31%-42%

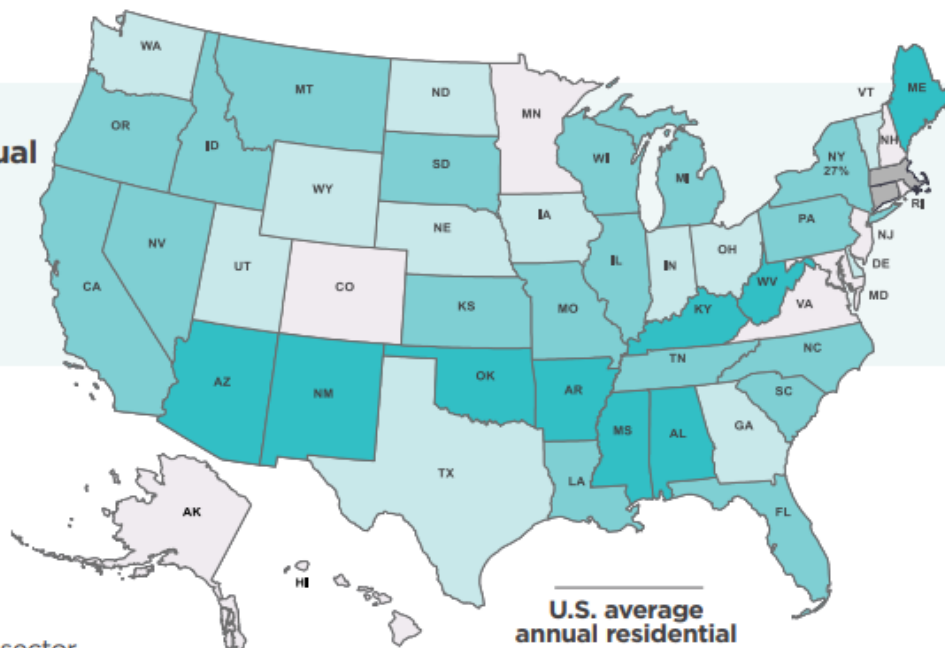
Co-op Avg: 26% | U.S. Avg: 24%
NRECA estimates

1 in 4 households served by electric co-ops have an annual income below \$35,000.

In nine states, as many as 42% of co-op-served households fall below this income level.

Unlike the rest of the electric sector, electric co-ops sell most of their power—52%—to households.

Keeping rates affordable is especially important for these consumers at the end of the line.



U.S. average annual residential electricity bill:
\$1,642

Source:
2023 EIA data

Note: Map reflects most recent available data.

From the 2025 AECI Responsibility Report that can be found at:
<https://www.aeci.org/environmental-stewardship>
(aeci.org under "Member-led Power")



\$1B+

invested in reducing air
emissions since 2005

36.4%

decrease in carbon
emissions since 2005

\$115M

invested to meet
Coal Combustion
Residuals and Effluent
Limitations Guidelines
issued by the
EPA since 2015

RESPONSIBLY POWERING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

As an electric cooperative, Associated's employees and rural members live where we generate electricity and take pride in caring for the air we breathe, water we drink and land we farm. Accountability to each other, and the resources we all depend on, is the foundation of Associated's strong culture of compliance, safety, innovation and environmental stewardship.

Balanced generation fleet shrinks carbon footprint

In the push and pull between the competing priorities of reliable, affordable and responsible power, Associated remains committed to managing a balanced generation fleet that decreases environmental impact while meeting members' power supply needs.

Associated's diverse generation fleet of coal, natural gas, liquid fuel, wind and hydropower resources allows for optionality that enables the co-op to take advantage of weather and lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Overall, our CO₂ emissions per megawatt-hour produced has been reduced by more than a third since 2005, thanks to alternative generation resources, plant heat rate improvements and a shift to natural gas generation.

Looking to the future, Associated's long-range environmental planning is key to continued environmental stewardship as demand for energy increases. When forming our long-term investment and development plans, a range of carbon-reduction scenarios are evaluated and prioritized for compliance with all federal and state regulations. Currently, Associated is constructing two new natural gas peaking units, one in Missouri and one in Oklahoma, to reliably power member needs. The new simple-cycle units will comply with all emissions requirements, be capable of burning a blend of up to 30% hydrogen if viable and economical, and have selective catalytic reducers installed to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions.

Left: Alex Leathers, chemical lab technician at Thomas Hill Energy Center, collects daily water samples for lab testing that ensures water quality and environmental compliance.



Grand prize winner Gerald Wade receives a \$500 energy certificate from WCE IT Manager Tim Bowler.



George Glecker receives his 32" smart tv donated by NW Electric from WCE lineman Johnny Sullins.



Thaddeus Liechti of Knob Noster learns about the equipment a line worker uses from WCE lineman Derek Cole.



Peter Yates happily claimed the bicycle and helmet he won in the annual meeting kids' prize drawing.

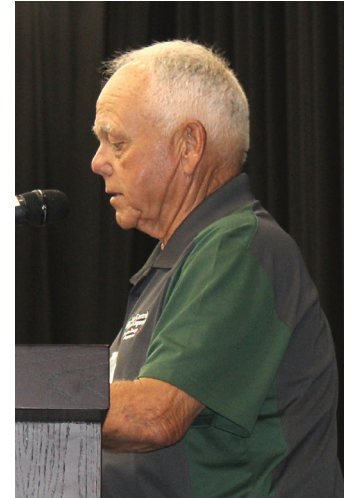
Allen's promise to members:

We give you our best

During his traditional message to members gathered at West Central Electric Cooperative's annual meeting Aug. 2, WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. assured members that they are always getting the best their cooperative has to offer. Following are the remarks from Allen to the members attending the meeting:

"Giving you our best means many things, but first and foremost, it means constantly looking for ways to ensure you have reliable and affordable electricity. It means thinking outside the box for alternatives to help accomplish that. It means spending time with our legislators in Jefferson City and Washington, D.C. to make sure they understand what rural Missouri and our members need. It means calling out the EPA on regulations that will negatively affect reliability and could further drive up costs that many members are already struggling to pay.

"When we pledge to give you our best, those are not just words to us. You are our members. You are the backbone of this cooperative and the three-tiered system that is designed to work specifically for making



Densil Allen Jr.

"We aren't going away, and we aren't going to be quiet when it comes to looking out for our members."

--WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. on making sure government leaders understand rural America

sure you have power when you need it, and that you can afford that power. You are the ones on our minds when we make decisions in the boardroom and out in the field.

"It seems like there is always something on the horizon that is threatening our way of life here in rural America and rural Missouri. Some things may seem beyond our control, and when they are—you can bet we will be working constantly behind the scenes to make a change. And when they are not, you can bet we are doing everything possible to make sure we stay in control. Many of our government leaders just don't understand rural America, but as long as there are cooperatives, and as long as we are able, we will continue to introduce them. Because we aren't going away, and we aren't going to be quiet when it comes to looking out for our members. As your board of directors and employees at West Central Electric – we pledge to give you our best. Always."

What is Operation RoundUp?

Operation RoundUp is a program designed to collect donations that will be used to benefit charitable organizations and the communities within the WCE service territory.

How did RoundUp begin?

The program was created by Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina in 1989. Since that time, the program has been adopted by more than 200 electric cooperatives nationwide and 18 cooperatives in Missouri. WCE has participated in the program since Sept. 1, 2018.

How does RoundUp work?

WCE members who want to participate have their monthly bill rounded up to the next dollar. For example, if your bill is \$65.50, it would be rounded up to \$66.00. A bill of \$59.99 would be rounded up to \$60.00. The funds collected are placed into the WCE Round Up Foundation and are donated to charitable organizations through an application process. WCE RoundUp Foundation does not keep any of the money collected. On average, a member will donate \$6.00 a year. Your donation is tax deductible, and you may opt out simply by contacting the cooperative if you do not wish to participate.

Why get involved in Operation RoundUp?

WCE exists to serve the changing needs of members by enhancing the quality of life through support of community developments and identifying and serving the members' energy needs. By adopting the Operation RoundUp program we can continue our commitment to our local communities and better serve our members.

Operation RoundUp Grant Recipients:

- Holden Food Pantry
- Odessa Community Services
- Holden Senior Center
- Trinity Lutheran School – Alma
- Partners for Odessa Parks & Rec
- Mayview Missouri Foundation
- Church Women of Higginsville
- Chilhowee Park Board
- Tri-County Outreach – Waverly
- Concordia Senior Center
- Higginsville Senior Center
- MU Extension of Lafayette & Johnson Counties
- Good Shepherd Care Community
- Mayview Fire Protection District
- Warrensburg Middle School
- Binding Hearts Quilt Ministry
- Montessori Schoolhouse – Higginsville
- Concordia Fire Protection District
- Assembly of God – Higginsville
- Lafayette County Enterprises
- Johnson Co. Livestock Committee
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Johnson Co.
- Corder Fire Protection District
- Lafayette Co. C-1 Phys. Ed. Dept.
- Concordia High School Backsnack Program
- Chilhowee Baptist Church
- Santa Fe FFA Backsnack Program
- Knob Noster Footsteps
- Health Care Coalition of Lafayette Co.
- University Extension–Lafayette & Johnson Co. 4H
- Chilhowee School District
- Helen's House
- Crest Ridge School District
- Friends of Lone Jack 33, Inc.

**List is just a sampling, as multiple awards are given throughout the year*

How much of a difference can Operation RoundUp really make?

WCE has over 12,000 members. If 50% of our membership participates in the program, Operation RoundUp could raise approximately \$36,000 per year. With those funds going to charitable organizations within our communities, the possibilities are endless.

Did you know your pocket change could change a life?





Applications and awarding of funds procedures

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Applications will be accepted from individuals or entities located geographically within the area served by the Cooperative. Organizations or individuals providing activities, programs, or benefits to people who live in the Cooperative geographic service area are eligible for funding consideration.

EVALUATION FACTORS

The following factors will be considered in the evaluation of all funding requests:

- Potential benefit to the area residents and the entire community; or,
- Level of the community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the funds; or,
- Fiscal and administrative capacity of the organization to deliver on proposed activities; or,
- Available balance of WCEF accounts; or,
- Provide predictable and evaluative results.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Contributions shall not be made for the following:

- Political, lobbying, fraternal, labor organizations.
- Fund-raising dinners, raffles, and other events.
- Capital fund campaigns.
- National fund drives.
- Advertising.
- Scholarship programs or individual scholarships.
- Uniforms or general sponsorships for league or traveling sports teams.
- Internal payroll expenses of an organization.
- Donations to organizations associated with a school district shall be limited to \$10,000 per calendar year.
- Organizations or individuals located outside the Cooperative geographic service area requesting support for activities occurring outside the Cooperative geographic service area.



Major Funding Categories

- Community Service
- Economic Development
- Education and Youth
- Environment
- Disaster Relief



• 2025 Operation RoundUp Recipients •



Warrensburg High School

\$2,000

Grant will be used for updated equipment for the Industrial Technology Department.



Duster's Trap Club

\$2,000

Grant will be used to help fund the club's facility electricity project.



Higginsville Montessori Schoolhouse

\$2,000

Grant will be used for the school's Wellness Initiative.



Holden School District

\$3,300

Grant will be used to help set up WINGS Academy, the district's alternative school classroom.



Tri-County Outreach Food Pantry

\$1,500

Grant will help stock supplies.



Concordia Senior Citizens Organization

\$1,500

Grant will be used to help fund the center's kitchen project.

Partnering to protect pollinators

Associated Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Power supply facts

AECI collaborates to help members and monarchs

Associated Electric Cooperative is proactively working to protect the monarch butterfly, as well as other pollinators. At the same time, it strives to keep electricity reliable and affordable for the six regional and 51 local electric cooperatives that own the member-owned wholesale power generator.

The population of monarch butterflies has declined 90% in the last 20 years, putting them at risk for placement on the endangered species list. Such a listing could have an adverse impact on Associated and its members by creating restrictions that make it more difficult and costly to site and maintain transmission facilities and rights of way.

Instead, Associated has partnered with other groups to protect pollinators, which play an important role in agriculture, natural landscapes and our quality of life.

Co-op matches grant for monarch habitat

Associated Electric Cooperative received a

\$45,000 grant through the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation to develop pollinator habitat at its Thomas Hill Energy Center. Associated matched those grant funds with a budgeted \$30,000 and in-kind labor.

Located on the cooperative's reclaimed Prairie Hill mine, 32 acres were seeded by staff with wildflowers and other plants beneficial to pollinators as a result of the grant. Staff continues to maintain and develop the seven plots.

Benefiting butterflies

- Staff also is planting four acres of pollinator habitat at New Madrid Power Plant and another acre of habitat at Thomas Hill Energy Center.

- At Thomas Hill, Associated adopted a mowing schedule on 100 acres to accommodate the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. These areas, previously mowed multiple times a year, are mowed only once in the July timeframe as recommended to ensure usable habitat and avoid impact to monarch caterpillars munching milkweed and monarch migration.

AECI builds habitat at Thomas Hill Energy Center.



Missouri's wind energy leader

Associated Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Power supply facts

Our power supplier, Associated Electric Cooperative, was the first and remains a leading provider of Missouri wind power to consumers.

The cooperative buys all the power from Missouri's first utility-scale wind farms. This commitment, as well as the strong high-voltage transmission system owned by Associated Electric Cooperative and its members, brought wind power to Missouri.

Associated has long-term wind power purchase agreements for 1,240 megawatts of wind energy, including 318 megawatts from Missouri's first utility-scale wind farms.

Associated continues to consider renewable energy options that meet its member systems' needs, and the cooperative added two Missouri wind energy projects in 2020 that total more than 470 MW of nameplate capacity. The 235-MW Clear Creek Energy Center was declared commercial May 4, and the White Cloud project began commercial operation in December 2020.

Locking in long-term, economical fixed-cost wind power helps Associated mitigate the impact of expected increases in fuel and power prices. In addition, the Kansas and Oklahoma wind farms add geographic diversity to Associated's wind farm portfolio.

Contracted wind farms generated 16% of members' energy in 2020.

Because wind is an intermittent resource, Associated supplements it with fuel-based generation to ensure reliable, affordable electricity for members.

Associated sells and does not retain or retire all of the environmental attributes of energy generated by more than 1,240 megawatts of contracted wind facilities. This brings in revenue that helps keep members' electricity affordable.

Bluegrass Ridge Wind Farm

27 2.1-MW turbines
50 MW contracted
10,000 acres
Gentry County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2007

Conception Wind Farm

24 2.1-MW turbines
50 MW contracted
7,000 acres
Nodaway County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2008

Cow Branch Wind Farm

24 2.1-MW turbines
50 MW contracted
7,000 acres
Atchison County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2008

Lost Creek Wind Farm

100 1.5-MW turbines
168 MW contracted
20,000 acres
DeKalb County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2010

Flat Ridge 2 Wind Farm

194 1.6-MW turbines
300 MW contracted
66,000 acres
Barber, Harper, Kingman,
Sumner counties, Kan.

Commercial operation, 2012

Osage Wind Farm

94 1.6-MW turbines
150 MW contracted
8,500 acres
Osage County, Okla.

Commercial operation, 2015

Clear Creek Energy Center

111 Vestas turbines
235 MW contracted
31,000 acres
Nodaway County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2020

White Cloud Wind Farm

89 turbines
236.5 MW contracted
40,000 acres
Nodaway County, Mo.

Commercial operation, 2020

West Central Electric News
a news service for the members of



**West Central Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**



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

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Report online at
www.westcentralelectric.coop under
"Report Outage"

District office

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

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www.westcentralelectric.coop

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General Manager

Michael Newland

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

From the Manager's Desk

WCE is your constant in the storm

In today's world, there are many uncertainties. Even when I feel I am completely sure of something, an event can unfold that makes me question. I am sure many of you have felt the same way.

For all of the crazy things that are not what they may seem, there is one constant I know with unwavering confidence -- the men and women who run and work at your electric cooperative want to be your constant in the storm. Through all of the uncertainty, we are working for you to ensure you have the most reliable and affordable power.

That may mean knowing you can depend on our linemen working in the middle of the night to repair an outage no matter the weather conditions. It may mean your management and staff employing an aggressive right-of-way program to cut down the number of outages related to trees in the lines. It may also mean your board and legislative team at the statewide level talking with our elected officials to make sure they keep in mind our rural members when considering regulations and legislation affecting reliability and the



Michael Newland
General Manager

cost of electricity.

You have probably heard me say this many times, but we are truly grateful for the trust you place in us, and we do our best to never take that for granted.

During these times when the cost of everything has skyrocketed from materials to wholesale power to fuel and even the groceries you purchase, your cooperative board and employees have trimmed and cut where we can without affecting the reliability of our electric system. Electricity is a necessity, not a luxury, and we do our best every day to show you that you can depend on us to be the constant in the storm -- whether that storm is rain, wind, sleet or hail, or whether that storm is keeping your power reliable and affordable.



**West Central Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

Higginsville, Mo. • Oak Grove, Mo. • (816) 565-4942 or (800) 491-3803

Member of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

From your cooperative



Operations Manager Scott Gard talks to students at Concordia High School about how the cooperative system is set up.

Education, Training and Information

Cooperative Principle #5: “Education, Training and Information for members, elected representatives (directors), 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.”

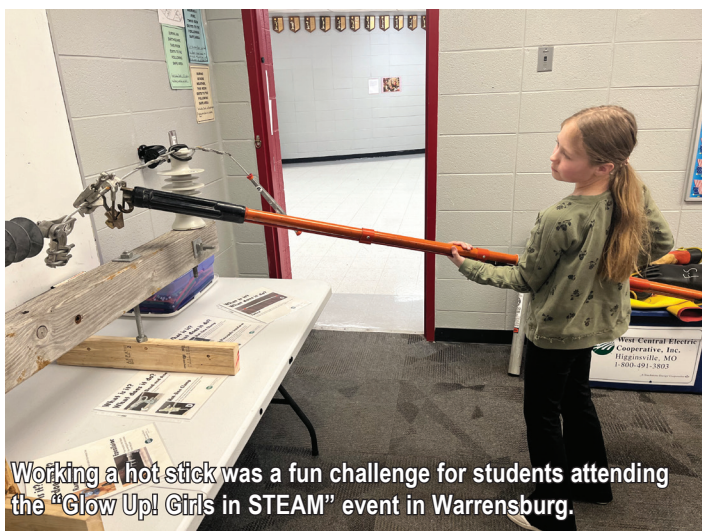
“Participating in community and school events allows us to spread that message, while teaching things like **electrical safety** and **how electricity ‘happens,’**” *Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander said.*

Your electric cooperative is about much more than just providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Keeping with each of the 7 Cooperative Principles is an important part of the bigger picture.

We do our best to educate about electrical safety, energy efficiency, the proper use of generators and how the electric system works, so we welcome the chance to get out in our communities and talk to members and non-members alike. In February, we gave several school safety programs and participated in several STEM and STEAM events that put us in touch with families from all around our service area.



Trying their hand at working in a lineman's gloves was a hit at Sni-A-Bar Elementary's STEM night.



Working a hot stick was a fun challenge for students attending the “Glow Up! Girls in STEAM” event in Warrensburg.



