



West Central Electric Cooperative

February 2026

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Electric News



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West Central Electric News
a news service for the members of



**West Central Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**



Headquarters
7867 S. Highway 13
Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-939-3639

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
 facebook **Instagram**

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.

Owned by those we serve.

From the manager's desk

Next phase of rate adjustment on target for May

You have heard us say many times over the last several years that we believe small, more frequent rate increases are easier for our members to handle than one large increase all at once. We still hold firm to that plan, and have been analyzing the latest rate study data to determine our next step in that process.

We have to take care of our members and ensure you have reliable and affordable electricity, but we also have to take care of the cooperative and ensure it is financially stable and strong. The way to accomplish both of those has been to keep the rate increases to a bare minimum, absorb what costs we can, and adjust rates just enough to cover what we need to when we need to.

The reason we do rate studies is to ensure we are not raising the rates higher than absolutely necessary to cover what we need to cover. Prices on wholesale power continue to increase, and material and supply costs are still elevated. In 2026, we will experience rate increases in our wholesale power costs to the tune of 4%. That includes a rate increase from our generation cooperative, Associated Electric, as well as a rate increase from our transmission cooperative, NW Electric. The rate study allows us to determine how much we are able to absorb before determining how much we will need to raise our rates.

At press time for this newsletter (mid December 2025) those numbers were



Michael Newland
General Manager

not yet firm for a May 1 rate adjustment. Your board of directors has been, and will continue to look carefully at numbers to make that determination, and intends to publish the firm numbers in the April issue of Electric News.

All of that said, we still have the absolute best system, in that we are member owned and not for profit, and anything extra goes right back to our members. We also have made the effort to return member equity (capital credit) portions of the most recent year, so members can see some of that return immediately. We know times are still volatile, and we continue to run on as bare bones as we can get by with, while still providing the safest, most reliable electricity.

As we face the inevitable increases in wholesale power, I want to assure you that many hours are spent combing through every detail to make sure we are doing our very best to provide safe, reliable and affordable power, keep your cooperative financially sound, and take care of our members.

As always, we are grateful for the trust you place in us, and we will continue to be transparent in our decisions and the reasons for them.

Sincerely,
Michael Newland, CPA
General Manager

ON THE COVER: WCE puts Cooperative Principle #7 "Concern for Community" into action while assisting the Missouri Veterans Home in Warrensburg with their Tree of Stars Banners program.

What you need to know



Ready to Serve...

Linemen hang banners at veterans home

Always committed to living out the 7 Cooperative Principles, your cooperative put into action "Concern for Community" when assisting the Missouri Veterans Home in Warrensburg with their Tree of Stars Banners program again this winter. Linemen Tim Frerking and Conner Lamphier spent time changing out banners for the home.

The Tree of Stars Banners program features photos and information about area veterans, several who are currently living in the home.

Latisha Koetting, supervisor of volunteer services, said the banners are sold in memory or honor of veterans, and help provide Christmas to each veteran living in the home. The program began in 2021 when Covid restrictions put limits on normal fundraisers.

"This year we have had 66 light pole banners flying over the veterans home with messages of inspiration, and we have honored over 350 veterans total," she said. "It is such a blessing to have (WCE linemen) do this because they do it right and with such care. We are grateful."

For more information on how you can honor your veteran, contact: Latisha.Koetting@mvc.dps.mo.gov.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

1

2026 Youth Tour & CYCLE contest

Essays must be turned in to the Higginsville office

no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 6, 2026.

Essays submitted online must arrive

by 4:30 p.m. Feb. 6, 2026.

2026 John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship

2

Applications must be postmarked

no later than Feb. 13, 2026.

Online must arrive **by 4:30 p.m. Feb. 13, 2026.**

3

2026 West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship

Applications must be postmarked

no later than March 6, 2026.

Online must arrive **by 4:30 p.m. March 6, 2026.**

Reporting outages

Online:

Report online at www.westcentralelectric.coop. Click on the tab at the top titled "Report Outage" and enter your account number or phone number; or report on the SmartHub app.

*PLEASE DO NOT REPORT OUTAGES ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE as it is not monitored 24/7 and your message could get missed. If you have internet service, go to the website to report instead.

By phone:

Call 1-800-491-3803 or 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:

A) Please have your name, or the name your service is under.

B) Your account number or your map location number (located on bill). 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.

From your cooperative



Substation site in September 2025 during the early construction phase.



(Middle and bottom photos) The Holden Rural Substation nearing completion in December 2025.

Holden Rural Substation online soon

“Long-term system improvements like the Holden Rural Substation are an investment for the next 60-80 years or more of growth in the Holden, Kingsville and Pittsville rural areas,” *WCE Engineering Manager Pete Nelson said.*

As West Central Electric works to enhance reliability to our members, Engineering Manager Pete Nelson answered questions regarding the construction of the cooperative’s latest project in that ongoing quest.

What is the official name of the new substation?

The official name is “Holden Rural Substation.” The “Rural” distinguishes it from the Holden transmission sub that sits south of the power plant

What will it accomplish?

Due to the growth north of Holden, our existing line can no longer handle the load requirements. This new sub will also enhance reliability for the members it serves due to the shorter line distance required.

Where is it located?

The new substation is located 2 miles north of Holden along 131.

Why is the substation being built in this location?

Associated Electric Cooperative Inc. owns the land around the Holden Power Plant, and this is a great example of cooperation in the three-tiered cooperative system. AECI produces the electricity and then hands it off to NW Electric Cooperative to transmit to the new substation. West Central Electric Cooperative then distributes it to our membership. It was an ideal fit to have this location available and a great cost savings.

When did construction start?

September 2025, but the planning started around two years ago.

When will it be online?

Early 2026 is the target timeline.

“WCE plans for short and long-term improvements. Short-term improvements would include transformer and meter base upgrades for our members when they add on to their homes and businesses. Long-term improvements like the Holden Rural Substation are an investment for the next 60-80 years or more of growth in the Holden, Kingsville, and Pittsville rural areas,” Nelson said.

STAYING SAFE DURING AN OUTAGE

We work hard to provide the most reliable service possible. Rest assured, if the power is out, we are on it!

The length of time it takes to restore your power depends on several factors, including the:



Extent of the storm's destruction



Severity of utility equipment damage



Number and extent of outages



Accessibility to damaged equipment

STAY SAFE UNTIL POWER IS RESTORED

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines, which could be live and deadly.
- If you come across a downed line, immediately call 9-1-1 to report it.
- Never enter a flooded room; the water could be energized.
- If you are standing in water, do not turn on/off power or flip a switch.



Prepare for a storm by gathering these items:



Bottles of water



Non-perishable food



Portable phone charger



Prescriptions



Battery-operated radio



Flashlights



Extra batteries



Pet supplies



Blankets



Warm clothing



First-aid kit



Hand sanitizer

THANK YOU for your patience during outages. When the lights go off, we are working safely and efficiently to restore power. The safety of our employees, as well as those we serve, is our TOP priority.

Mother Nature's wrath can mean service disruptions

Although we work hard to maintain our equipment, monitor power delivery 24/7, and do all we can to keep the lights on, there are circumstances beyond our control that can interfere with power delivery. Winter weather is one example. Winter storms can impact the distribution of electricity due to ice, heavy winds, sleet, and other extreme conditions.

Regardless of the reason, know that when the lights go out — even during extreme weather — we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Along with causing outages, wintery conditions can cause hiccups with power delivery that include blinking lights or ebbs and flows in the amount of power that comes into your home. Although blinking lights can be a symptom of other problems such as loose wiring connections or overloaded circuits, they can also be caused by extreme weather conditions.

Ice/freezing rain: Ice accumulation on power lines makes them heavy. One-half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line. This added weight can impact power distribution and even bring down a power line. Ice that forms on power lines also increases its surface area, which means gusts of wind have more to catch. The weight of ice on tree limbs can cause them to fall on power lines as well.

Wind: Wind can cause tree branches to brush power lines, which can result in blinking or flickering lights. This is why it's so important for us to keep trees cleared around power lines and poles. In addition, heavy winds (or extreme wind plus ice) can cause lines to move and sway. If they gain enough momentum, they can gallop or jump, which can cause lines to either break or make contact with each other causing power disruptions.

Melting ice: Melting ice puts extra strain on power lines causing the lines to touch or rest on one another. Because of this, melting ice can cause outages even though the temperature is rising. Depending on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

Wind or ice + tree branches: In any weather condition (or even in calm conditions), tree-related issues cause the most power outages in many service areas. Branches, limbs or even tree trunks can fall into power lines and cause problems. Add wind, freezing rain, or ice to the mix for an increased potential for problems.

Icy Roads: Vehicles sliding on ice can strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer, causing an outage or other problems.

Blizzards: Heavy snowfall, icy roads, or reduced visibility can make it a little more difficult for our crews to get out and fix problems, although we do all we can to get out there to address service issues as soon as possible.

To learn more go to safeelectricity.org.

From your cooperative

New Employee Spotlight



Aydan Ramsey • Apprentice Lineman



West Central Electric is pleased to welcome Aydan Ramsey, who has joined the cooperative as an apprentice lineman.

Ramsey is a native of Braymer, Mo. and says he is looking forward to learning the skills of the trade here at WCE.

Ramsey is currently working out of the Oak Grove location.

2025 Member Appreciation Day Winners

Willie Wiredhand Collectible Ornaments:

Brenda Nieweg, Napoleon
Marie Turner, Bates City
Krystal Borgman, Holden
Glenn Rogers, Concordia

\$25 Energy Certificate:

Alicia & Carl Hunt, Oak Grove
Gary Freeman, Oak Grove
Terri Monteer, Bates City
Mike Scott, Bates City
Pat Tye, Odessa
Brenda Hinck, Concordia
Linda Barnes, Centerview
Jeff Borgstadt, Higginsville



Keith Hinck



Sharon Rogers



Gary Nations II

Linda Barnes

Member Appreciation Day

Each year at Christmas, our traditional Member Appreciation Day gives us a chance to spend some extra time with our members. We love to share a cup of coffee and a visit, provide some prizes and listen to your thoughts. Although only one official day is set aside, we want you to know we appreciate you **EVERY** day.

Member Appreciation Day is also a time when we can say thank you for all that **YOU** do to support your cooperative and its employees. Your positive comments and kind words when we are restoring your power during challenging and sometimes dangerous situations are appreciated more than you know. We are thankful for those of you who support Operation RoundUp and allow us to provide grants to help fund important community projects. We say thank you to those willing to serve on our nominating committee, board of directors and RoundUp Board. We appreciate your dedication to your cooperative and your communities!

So thank you to all of our members for all that you do and enable us to do. You are appreciated each and every day!

2026 Scholarship Opportunities

2026 West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship

I. Amount of Scholarship

This year, approximately 20 high school seniors meeting DESE graduation requirements will receive a \$1,000 West Central Electric Cooperative scholarship for use at any college, university, trade or technical school the fall semester after their senior year/high school graduation.

II. Selection Criteria

- A. The applicant will be selected without regard to sex, race, religion or color.
- B. The applicant's parent or legal guardian must be a current WCE member.
- C. A cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average is required.
- D. Students MUST provide an ACT score or equivalent college entrance exam score to apply.
- E. A high school transcript must accompany the application.

**Applications received without transcripts WILL BE PENALIZED.

F. The Scholarship Committee will consider financial need and special circumstances when selecting the winner of this scholarship. Please address financial need and any special circumstances when answering question #7 on this application.

G. Please submit a recent photo along with your application. This photo will be used for press releases and for the WCE newsletter if you are selected a winner. If you submit your application online, please email a

photo to heather@wcecoop.com.

H. All scholarship applications **MUST BE TYPED**.

I. High School counselor must sign your transcript. (Home school transcripts are accepted, but must be signed by the teacher.)

III. Restrictions

A. Children and grandchildren of current West Central employees and directors are not eligible to apply.

B. Four-year recipients of the John and Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship Trust will not be considered.

IV. Application Deadline

All applications **must be postmarked on or before March 6**,

2026. Send applications to: Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, 7867 S. Highway 13, Higginsville, MO 64037.

V. Online applications

Scholarship applications are available online at www.westcentralelectric.coop under the heading "Youth Programs." Applications may be printed and mailed, or filled out online and emailed. If you choose to email your application, please also either email your photo as a jpeg to heather@wcecoop.com or mail a photograph along with your transcript. Applications submitted via email **must arrive by 4:30 p.m. March 6, 2026**.

VI. Winners' Notification

Recipients of the scholarship will be notified by **May 1, 2026**.

2026 John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship

I. Background

The John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship Trust was created under the terms of the Last Will & Testament of Kathryn English. The purpose of this trust is to provide scholarship grants for high school seniors who meet DESE graduation requirements, and who are or were active 4-H members at the time of their high school graduation, and who desire to attend college the fall semester following their senior year/high school graduation to pursue a degree. John English, a former director of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., designated West Central's Board of Directors as Trustees of the Memorial Scholarship Trust.

II. Amount of Scholarship

The John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship Committee will award one \$1,000 scholarship (\$500 per semester) to a student beginning his/her freshman year in college. This student may reapply for additional funds for their next three years of study. Renewal requests will be filed in the spring and submitted with a transcript for the previous school year. Grants will be paid out by semester as long as the student remains enrolled full-time and meets academic requirements stated on the renewal application. The amount of these grants may vary due to availability of funds. The committee may decide to make one or more one-time scholarship awards based on merit.

III. Selection Criteria

- A. The applicant will be selected without regard to sex, race, religion or color.
- B. The applicant must attend a high school in West Central Electric's service area -- Lafayette, Johnson and eastern Jackson counties (including Oak Grove, Lone Jack and home school students) OR have a parent or legal guardian who is a current West Central Electric member. Districts NOT in the WCE service area (Sherwood, Grain Valley, Ft. Osage, etc.) may have students who qualify based on a parent or legal guardian being a current member of the cooperative.
- C. A cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average is required.
- D. Students MUST provide an ACT score or equivalent college entrance exam score to apply.
- E. Participation in 4-H at the time of high school graduation is required.
- F. Two reference letters are required. No letter may come from a relative, and one letter must be from an adult involved with 4-H (for example a project leader, a 4-H youth specialist, etc.)

G. Students must submit a copy of their completed Missouri Report Form (including required signatures) along with their application.

H. A high school transcript must accompany the application.

I. The Scholarship Committee will consider financial need and special circumstances when selecting the winner of this scholarship. Please address financial need and any special circumstances when answering question #4 on this application.

J. Please submit a recent photo along with your application. This photo will be used for press releases and for the WCE newsletter if you are selected a winner. If you submit your application online, please email a photo to heather@wcecoop.com.

K. Finalists will be required to participate in an interview with the scholarship committee. If applying, you should tentatively plan to be available that evening for interviews, should you be named a finalist.

L. All scholarship applications **MUST BE TYPED**.

M. High School counselor must sign your transcript. (Home school transcripts are accepted, but must be signed by the teacher.) ****Applications received without transcripts WILL BE PENALIZED.**

IV. Restrictions

Children and grandchildren of current WCE directors are not eligible to apply.

V. Application Deadline

All applications **must be postmarked on or before Feb. 13, 2026**.

Send applications to Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, 7867 S. Highway 13, Higginsville, MO 64037.

VI. Online applications

Scholarship applications are available online at www.westcentralelectric.coop under the heading "Youth Programs." Applications may be printed and mailed, or filled out online and emailed. If you choose to email your application, please also either email your photo as a jpeg to heather@wcecoop.com or mail a photograph along with your transcript. Applications submitted via email **must arrive by 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 13, 2026**.

VII. Finalist Notification

Interviews will be scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, March 25, 2026. All students applying for this scholarship should tentatively plan for an interview on this date. Those scheduled for interviews **will be notified by March 1, 2026**.

Scholarship applications are available from your high school counselor's office, online at www.westcentralelectric.coop or from West Central Electric Cooperative's Higginsville office.

From the WCE boardroom

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Nov. 25, 2025

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. Nov. 25, 2025, pursuant to the bylaws of the cooperative and previous resolution of the board of directors. The meeting was called to order by President Denisil Allen Jr. Attorney Sheri Smiley caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Allen Jr., Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Dale Jarman, Robert Simmons, Stan Rhodes, Jeremy Ahmann Colby Dowell and Elizabeth Houtsma. Also present was General Manager Michael Newland.

CFC COST OF SERVICE STUDY

Oman Abdallah of CFC presented the cost of service study to the board. Demand rates were discussed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

An AMEC report was added to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting on Oct. 23, 2025; expenditures for the month of October 2025; new membership applications and membership terminations, and the treasurer's report.

FINANCING AND TREASURER'S REPORT

Rebecca Hoeflicker presented the October 2025 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 interest rates, the impact of large loads on the budget and projections for November. She gave updated budget numbers and reported some fleet has come in and has been paid for. She reviewed investments. New services connected were reported on. She reported she drew down \$500,000.00 on the line of credit and reported on operating revenue. She also reported she received the proceeds from the truck that had been totaled. The financial reports were accepted as presented.

APPROVE LINE OF CREDIT AND AUTHORIZE BORROWING FROM CFC

Hoeflicker presented a resolution that was passed by the board.

APPROVAL OF STAFF REPORTS

The following staff reports were approved:

Operations Report

Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written operations report. He reported on crews, pole change outs, and outages and causes for the month. He gave a mechanic and fleet report. A brush crew and right-of-way report was given and spraying bids are coming in.

Safety and Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written safety and engineering report. As of Oct. 31, 2025, employees have worked 1,094 days without a lost-time accident. Co-op employees drove a total of 41,761 miles as of the end of October without a serious accident. He reported on safety meetings, crew visits, and gave an engineering/staking department report. A MECIP audit was completed. The Bryson Lake Subdivision was discussed.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided a written member services report. He provided updates on Operation RoundUp, the communication department activities, including education safety programs, Youth Tour presentations, and FFA speech contests judged. Net metered solar systems and rebates were reported on. Vanilla Direct cash pay-



ments were discussed. He handed out the handbook that will be available to members. He also presented the new NISC bill re-design for the co-op and the board discussed demand billing. It was decided to discuss that issue in depth at the upcoming board retreat.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Scholarship Committee gave a report.

POLICY AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Policy and Bylaws Committee gave a report. They are reviewing several policies and will bring back their recommendations later. They are meeting again in December.

NW BOARD REPORT

The next NW board meeting will be Dec. 17. Loren Haines was hired as the new manager.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave an update on the executive committee meeting he attended. He reported on i-Pad voting costs, a communications report, a report on data centers, and announced that West Central was given an award for the best co-op local pages for 2025.

APPROVE 2026 BOARD MEETING DATES

The following 2026 board dates were approved:

Jan. 22, 2026	July 23, 2026
Feb. 26 – 27, 2026 (board retreat)	Aug. 27, 2026
March 26, 2026	Sept. 24, 2026
April 23, 2026	Oct. 22, 2026
May 28, 2026	Nov. 24, 2026
June 25, 2026	Dec. 17, 2026

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley gave the legal report for the month.

MANAGERS REPORT

Newland gave the manager's report. He had provided a written report to the board prior to the meeting. He discussed the cost of service study, fleet, Oak Grove, the budget, Lone Jack, new meters, the board retreat, scheduling a new strategic session and staffing. Poles and a landowner dispute were discussed. Work with contractors was reviewed. Fleet was discussed and he presented several different options.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Directors who attended the Region 8 meeting gave reports. Director expense reports were also discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive session was called at 12:17 a.m. and was out at 12:29 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT

October 2025 Statement of Operations

	This month	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Revenue	\$3,241,050	\$35,528,828	\$31,017,585
Power Bill Expense	2,060,356	21,620,620	18,814,754
Operation & Maintenance Expense	828,573	7,652,024	7,385,930
Depreciation Expense	222,927	2,188,380	2,101,268
Interest Expense	134,551	1,382,234	1,331,563
Total cost of Service (Total Expenses)	3,246,407	32,843,258	29,633,515
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(5,357)	2,685,570	1,384,070
Other Margins	147,689	427,496	295,639
TOTAL MARGINS	\$142,332	\$3,113,066	\$1,679,709