

March 2024



West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# Electric News

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# Reminder to members that rate increase will take effect in April

Members are reminded that the 2024 rate increase approved by the board earlier this year will be reflected with members' April usage. The change amounts to a total overall revenue increase for the cooperative of 8.8 percent.

**RESIDENTIAL:** The new residential rate will see charges for the first 800 kWh set at \$0.1049 (up from \$0.096) and over 800 kWh at a reduced rate of \$0.0884 (up from \$0.0795.) The service availability charge will increase \$0.05 to \$1.37 per day.

**COMMERCIAL THREE-PHASE:** The new commercial three-phase monthly rate will be \$0.0878 (up from \$0.0798) for all kWh. The service availability charge will increase from \$2.24 per day to \$2.34 per day.

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LARGE POWER:** The commercial and industrial large power monthly rate will be \$0.0531 (up from \$0.0472) for all kWh. Demand stays the same at \$11.60, and service availability increases from \$4.79 per day to \$5.00 per day.

**DUSK-TO-DAWN LIGHTS:** Increases in dusk-to-dawn (\$9.20 to \$9.90) and street lights (\$14.20 to \$14.90) per month will round out the increases.

These decisions follow a cost-of-service study done late last year to determine what the cooperative needs to continue to provide members with reliable electric service in response to large increases over the past few years in material costs and projected increases in wholesale power.

## West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

### Headquarters:

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

### To report outages 24/7:

Call 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • or report outages at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) under "View & Report Outages"

### District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

### Website:

[www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://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*

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

## HOW CAN I PAY MY ELECTRIC BILL?

*Tired of wondering if your bill made it to the co-op on time? Is your bill late getting to you through the mail? There are several ways to pay your bill other than traditional mail or getting out in the weather to drop a payment off at the office.*



### AUTO DRAFT

You can sign up to have your payment automatically taken out of your savings account or checking account each month on the due date. No more worrying about having to mail your payment or deliver it to the office. Contact WCE at 800-491-3803 to set up.



### AUTO CREDIT/DEBIT CARD

We can also automatically charge your credit or debit card each month on your due date to give you peace of mind that your bill is taken care of even if you are out of town at the time. Contact WCE at 800-491-3803 to set up auto credit/debit card payments.



### PAY-BY-PHONE

WCE has a secure payment line you can use to pay your bill over the phone from anywhere. All you need is your account number or phone number the account is listed under. Call 1-855-874-5349 and pay your bill with your bank account information, debit or credit card.



### SmartHub

Pay your bill online through the SmartHub app or on the SmartHub link on our website. It's easy, fast, and you can get your bill paid and go on with your day. It's easy to set up! Contact us at 800-491-3803 if you need help setting your account up on SmartHub.

# Positive comments from members are bright spot during snowstorm outages

After spending the last weeks of 2023 wondering if winter would ever arrive, Missourians received their answer in a start to the new year that saw more snow days than in-school days, and colder temperatures than Alaska at the time.

Outages caused by a combination of heavy snow and strong winds caused issues for cooperatives across the state. Although West Central Electric fared better than cooperatives to the north, the first major storm

caused more than 1,500 outages on the local system. Many of those were repeat outages as crews battled galloping lines caused by heavy, wet snow falling off power lines because of the high winds.

The event went on all day in harsh working conditions, but morale was bolstered by the many positive comments received from our members over the phone, to our linemen in the field, and on social media. Employees from the front office taking the calls to the linemen out on the system appreciated so many encouraging comments from members concerned for their well-being.

All of the members we encountered during the snowstorm said they were very happy with the services West Central provides them," Line Foreman Jesse Underwood said. "A few of them even mentioned they had noticed how much effort we are putting into our tree trimming to eliminate some of these potential problems."

A few of the members who took time to comment on our social media pages during the height of the outage had this to say:

*"I appreciate them going out in this mess. Our power is out right now but I know they will have it back on as quickly as possible. Stay safe!"*

*"Thank you so very much for your work and especially the linemen having to be out in this weather. PLEASE be safe."*

*"Thank you to our linemen who are working in these conditions to ensure we have power. You are appreciated!"*

*"My power doesn't go out very often, but when it does I know it will be restored as soon as possible. You guys are the best. I hope tomorrow is a non event for you."*

*"Love being able to talk to a live person when I call!! Many thanks to everyone's efforts today."*

*"We have the best! Thanks to ALL who keep the lights--and heat--on."*

*"Thank you for all the hard work you have done, you guys rock!"*

The feeling is mutual, as cooperative employees and linemen feel our members are the best -- especially during times when it would be easy for members to get upset with the circumstances and they instead are quite the opposite.

"It's always nice to go to a member's house who is thankful for their power instead of upset that they don't have any at the time," Underwood said. "I know my crew and I appreciate that a lot."

"We appreciate our members' patience when we fall victim to Mother Nature," General Manager Michael Newland said. "Your willingness to wait patiently in the cold while we restore power speaks volumes about the character of the people we serve. It's why we love our jobs, why we strive to keep rates low and reliability high and why we invest in our communities."

And all of those comments received during outages?

"They definitely don't go unnoticed," Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander said. "We make sure to draw our employees' attention to them, after the crisis is averted so they know how much our members appreciate them. And we hope our members know how much we appreciate them as well."



WCE lineman Cabot Long works to get members back on during the January snowstorm. Photo courtesy of Line Foreman Todd Gast



# Beware of damaged power equipment:

## Energy can spread like ripples on a pond

The transmission and distribution of power is safe and reliable much of the time. However, storms, critters and car accidents can damage energized utility equipment such as power lines, poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Not only can this cause minor inconveniences, like service interruptions and road closures, it can also create life-threatening situations when energy invisibly spreads like ripples on a pond.

Here is what can occur when utility equipment is damaged:

**Step potential** happens when a person walks from one voltage “ripple” to another and their feet experience a difference in voltage.

**Touch potential** happens when someone touches something at one voltage and steps on or contacts something else at a different voltage.

Both types of potential can cause serious internal and external injuries and death, since electric current enters the body at one point and exits at another.

### How to stay safe

Take precautions near downed power lines, poles or other damaged power equipment. Always assume damaged power equipment is energized; it can look lifeless and harmless and still be live.

Besides accidents, storms and animal interferences, another hazardous situation may occur when equipment or extensions get too close to or contact power equipment.

### To stay safe around damaged utility equipment:

- Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Report damaged power equipment to a dispatcher.
- Only exit if you see smoke or there is a fire.

### If you must exit due to a fire, carefully do the following:

- Cross your arms and make a clean jump out.
- Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.
- If you are unable to hop, shuffle away without lifting your feet.
- Do not return to the vehicle.

### If you are near the scene:

- Do not approach the scene to help.
- Stay at least 50 feet away.
- Do not lean on or touch anything.
- Never approach a downed power line or pole or a damaged padmount transformer.

For more electrical safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).





## Around Damaged POWER LINES



### Energy Can Spread Like RIPPLES ON A POND

Storms and car accidents can damage energized power lines/poles and padmount transformers (green boxes).

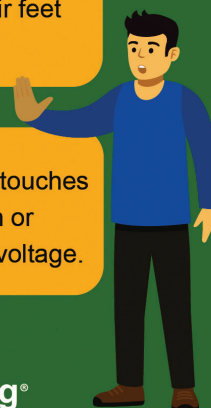
The damage can cause energy to spread like ripples on a pond, causing:

**Step potential**, when a person walks from one voltage “ripple” to another and their feet experience a difference in voltage.


**Touch potential**, when someone touches something at one voltage and steps on or contacts something else at a different voltage.

Learn more at:

 **Safe  
Electricity.org**







Presented by  
**Missouri's  
Electric  
Cooperatives**

**Location:**  
Courtyard by Marriott  
Jefferson City

**ENERGY** July 31- Aug. 1, 2024  
**in Today's Classroom**

Educators in the middle school and high school grades who have a background in science, math, agricultural science and building trades are ideal candidates for this course.

Learn from industry experts and earn professional development credits. Energize your classrooms with exciting topics and free educational tools!

## Energy in Today's Classroom provides 15 hours Professional Development for area teachers

Area teachers interested in attending the 2024 Energy in Today's Classroom workshop can apply now through West Central Electric.

Energy in Today's Classroom is a two-day course designed to fully support Missouri's statewide educational standards, and provides teachers with a background in energy and energy production. Course topics include: energy basics, energy sources, power generation and transmission, economics and energy production, energy transfer, the history and future of energy, tour of a substation and tour of an operating power plant.

Educators in middle and high school grade levels who focus on math, science, agricultural science, energy and building trades are ideal candidates for the course. In addition to the materials and information covered during the course, participating teachers will take home a classroom kit for their use at no cost. Tools and reference guides are included in the kit, along with several hands-on demonstration tools to enhance classroom learning opportunities.

Several teachers in the WCE service area have taken advantage of the program over the 12 years it has been in existence, and all have walked away with knowledge and tools to benefit their students.

"It was incredible to deep dive into the different types of energies and learn not only how they are generated but the economic impact they have as well," ag instructor and 2021 participant Stephanie Smithson said. "I now have access to so many resources that I am now able to implement in my classroom. It is my hope that with the utilization of these new resources that my students will become informed consumers of energy, they will develop a respect for energy, they will contribute to the conservation of energy, and that they will walk away with the skills to perform basic electrical maintenance and installation."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY: Call 800-491-3803 or email Brent Schlotzhauer at: [brent@wcecoop.com](mailto:brent@wcecoop.com)**

## Take Control & Save announces changes to 2024 rebate program

A few changes in the cooperative rebate program have gone into effect with the new year. Those changes include an updated form for Level 2 EV charging stations and a change in the allowance, as well as new SEER ratings for heat pumps:

### Electric Vehicle Level 2 Charging Station

For qualifying Electric Vehicle Level 2 Charging Stations

- Equipment must be new and UL approved/certified.
- Will be allowed up to a \$250 rebate for the purchase and installation of a Level 2 Charger, with a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the charger and installation.
- The cooperative reserves the right to complete an on-site inspection of the charger after installation.
- Electric vehicle charging stations that receive rebates may be subject to cooperative load control programs.
- Limit two (2) rebates per member address.

**Rebate up to \$250.00**

### Air Source Heat Pump \*NEW\*

Rebates for air source heat pumps shall apply under the following terms and conditions:

- New home and building construction
- Replacement of an existing heat pump, electric resistance or fossil fuel equipment in the home
- The heat pump must be qualified with an Energy Star rating and meet the following efficiency standards for rebates: **Energy Star +2 SEER rating 17.2 SEER, which is the equivalent to 18 SEER on new old stock equipment.**

**Rebate \$150.00 per ton**

### Dual Fuel Heat Pump

Rebates for dual fuel heat pumps shall apply under the following terms and conditions:

- New home and building construction
- Replacement of electric resistance heat
- Replacement of an existing dual-fuel heat pump
- "Add-On" Air source heat pump to an existing fossil fuel heating system
- The dual-fuel heat pump MUST use a fossil fuel back-up system. Wood burning and electric resistance units are NOT eligible.
- The heat pump must be qualified with an Energy Star rating and meet the following efficiency standards for rebates: **Energy Star +2 SEER rating 17.2 SEER, which is the equivalent to 18 SEER on new old stock equipment.**

**Rebate \$150.00 per ton**

### Mini-Split Heat Pump

Rebates for dual fuel heat pumps shall apply under the following terms and conditions:

- New home and building construction
- Replacement of electric resistance heat, existing dual-fuel heat pump or fossil fuel equipment
- "Add-On" Air source heat pump to an existing fossil fuel heating system
- The dual-fuel heat pump MUST use a fossil fuel back-up system. Wood burning and electric resistance units are NOT eligible.
- The heat pump must be qualified with an Energy Star rating and meet the following efficiency standards for rebates: **Energy Star +2 SEER rating 17.2 SEER, which is the equivalent to 18 SEER on new old stock equipment.**

**Rebate \$150.00 per ton**



## A DIVERSE FUEL MIX IS A SLAM DUNK FOR RELIABLE ELECTRICITY

Just like a basketball team depends on players with different skillsets, we depend on a variety of fuels to generate the electricity that powers life 24/7. Renewable energy sources are key players in our fuel portfolio, but the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. A diverse team of fuels ensures we have electricity when we need it.

*Source: Associated Electric Cooperative Inc.,  
2023 resources for member load*



# A Balanced Team for Reliability

by Maura Giles

**T**he winningest basketball teams in history are ones that are consistent and have players with varying abilities. Some are better at shooting 3-pointers, some are best at defense. Having a balanced mix of skills makes the team a powerhouse on the court. The way to keep electricity reliable is a bit like that too.

The power team first requires a foundation of consistent sources that can be put in the game any time they're needed. Having enough "always available" fuel sources like natural gas and coal can ensure consistent power generation.

Just like a team needs different players for different situations, our power grid requires multiple sources to keep the grid running. Relying solely on one player to win every game is not an effective strategy — if they get injured, you'll likely lose. Similarly, using a single fuel source for electricity generation poses a significant risk to energy reliability. Natural disasters, geopolitical tensions or unforeseen disruptions can severely impact the supply chain of a particular fuel. A diverse mix of energy sources acts as a safeguard, ensuring that the grid remains operational even in the face of unexpected challenges.

A diverse energy mix also enhances grid flexibility by accommodating the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Think of solar power like a team's inconsistent three-point shooter. It's awesome when the sun is shining bright, but what if it's nighttime or a cloudy day? That's where the other players, such as wind,

hydro, nuclear, natural gas and coal can step up and keep the team scoring.

Diverse fuel sources contribute to the stability and reliability of the electric grid. The different sources have varying characteristics, including generation patterns, responsiveness and storage capabilities. This diversity allows for a more balanced and resilient energy system that can adapt to fluctuating demand and unforeseen circumstances. Having a mix of these energy sources is like having a team with different skills to handle various situations and scenarios.

A diverse set of energy sources is essential, but that's not the only thing we need to have reliable electricity — or a winning team. Basketball teams are always trying out new plays or training rookies to create a versatile lineup. Similarly, electric cooperatives are constantly innovating to maintain reliability for tomorrow. But creating new ways to make our power sources more efficient and reliable takes time, money and advances in technology that aren't necessarily ready yet.

As we continue to work on the innovations of tomorrow, the key to keeping our electricity reliable right now is ensuring a diverse "team" of fuels. Each one brings something special to the table, and together, they make sure we have the power we need, whenever we need it.

*Maura Giles writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 local electric cooperatives.*



# FROM THE WCE BOARD

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Dec. 21, 2023

The meeting, was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Robert Simmons, secretary, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Dale Jarman, Jeremy Ahmann, and Colby Dowell. Clark Bredehoeft was absent. Also present were General Manager Michael Newland, and Cooperative Attorney Megan McCord.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

## APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Nov. 30, 2023; expenditures for the month of November 2023; new membership applications and membership terminations.

## APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 2023 reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Newland presented the November 2023 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. He reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. He also gave the investment report. He presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios.

## CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATION FORFEITURE FOR ESTATE PAYOUTS

The board reviewed 2023 capital credit allocation forfeiture for estate payouts. After discussion, the board resolved to approve the allocation forfeiture as presented.

Operations and Safety Report: Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written Operations Report. He reported on crews and recent peer reviews. There were no major outages to report, but there were several non-co-op vehicle accidents that struck poles. Mechanic work and fleet were reported on. He gave an update on pressure washers. Brush crews and right-of-way was reported on.

Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. Planned construction and pole attachment make-ready was discussed. An energy/staking department report was given. Hours worked without a lost-time accident and hours driven in November were reported on.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided a report to supplement his written Member



Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and RoundUp updates. He reported on car-versus-pole accident collection efforts, recent meter tampering, and the member survey currently being conducted

## REVIEW FINANCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

Newland reviewed the financial policy statement with the board, and noted that the policy will be reviewed again at the board retreat.

## APPROVE EXPENSE DEFERRAL PLAN

Newland reviewed with the board the three-year expense deferral plan, which is required to comply with a change in RUS accounting standards. The plan was approved as presented.

## APPROVE RATE INCREASE

Newland discussed the cost-of-service study recommendations and explained the necessity of a rate increase. Management recommended an overall 8.8% rate increase effective April 2024. The board approved the increase as presented.

## AMEC

Newland reported his attendance to the recent AMEC meeting. Items of interest included: smart meters, Renew Missouri, and an AECl update.

## LEGAL REPORT

There was no legal report for the month.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. He gave an update on the site in Lone Jack and reviewed the fleet analysis.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

None.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 12:09 p.m. and adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

## MEETING ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

## FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • November 2023

|  | This month         | YTD 2023            | YTD 2022            |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                               | <b>\$2,520,507</b> | <b>\$29,949,800</b> | <b>\$29,923,118</b> |
| Power Bill Expense                           | 1,591,635          | 17,448,212          | 17,116,061          |
| Operation & Maintenance Expense              | 518,120            | 6,945,088           | 7,116,783           |
| Depreciation Expense                         | 229,201            | 2,465,354           | 2,340,586           |
| Interest Expense                             | 123,080            | 1,363,295           | 1,262,755           |
| <b>Total cost of Service (Total Expense)</b> | <b>2,462,036</b>   | <b>28,221,949</b>   | <b>27,836,185</b>   |
| Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)    | 58,471             | 1,727,851           | 2,086,933           |
| Other Margins                                | 36,824             | 614,574             | 247,689             |
| <b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>                         | <b>\$95,295</b>    | <b>\$2,342,425</b>  | <b>\$2,334,622</b>  |

