



West Central Electric Cooperative

March 2025

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Electric News

Working
ahead
to stay
prepared

PAGE 6

Guest Column

Saul Logan, Missouri's YLC
rep talks Youth Tour
page 2

Looking to upgrade your
home's efficiency?
Tax credits can help
page 3

Balancing electricity
supply and demand
Behind-the-scenes network
ensures you have power
pages 4-5

West Central Electric News
a news service for the members of



West Central Electric
Cooperative, Inc.



Headquarters

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452,
Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

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

To report outages 24/7

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

District office

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

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.*

Guest Column

Youth Tour changes lives, creates leaders

On June 14, 2024, I embarked on a journey to Jefferson City for the first day of the Youth Tour. I didn't know it then, but this day was the start of the most eventful and awesome week of my life, and something that would have a lasting impact on me.

The Youth Tour changed my perspective of the United States. Throughout my life, I have always had a passion for history and current events. I was confident that I was knowledgeable about the United States. Furthermore, I had developed a deep appreciation of this country and what it has to offer. However, after the first day in Washington D.C., it became clear to me that I was missing something. It is one thing to hear about events that happen, but actually getting to see where events take place is completely different. Rural Missouri is just so far away from the heart of our government that it can seem at times that we are in

our own world, absent from what is going on in the federal government. However, being a member of the Youth Tour allowed me to better understand these events as tangible and important to me as a citizen of rural Missouri, rather than just as stories I heard or read.

The Youth Tour also allowed me to become more confident. In school, I settled into a singular friend group, and didn't interact with others. Staying in a singular friend group is easy when you have the same classes with these people. But when new people emerged, I found it more difficult to be as outgoing. This changed with the impact of the



Saul Logan
Youth Leadership Council
Missouri Representative

Youth Tour. I met new people from around Missouri, all with different backgrounds. I talked with people who I had never met before, and bonded over common traits -- even with those who, at first, seemed like I had nothing in common with. Through the Youth Tour, I realized that there is ALWAYS a unifying characteristic. By the conclusion of the trip, I had made friends with numerous people. Now, I look at meeting new people as an opportunity rather than a burden.

The Youth Tour also allowed me to be a part of the National Youth Leadership Council as the representative from the state of Missouri. With this position, I

have the privilege to organize projects that are useful to West Central Electric Cooperative and my community, as well as Missouri as a whole. Furthermore, I am honored to be able to experience what it's like to be a leader. With this experience, I look at problems around me and my peers with a newfound perspective of how a leader should behave.

The Youth Tour has been an extraordinary opportunity for me. It has allowed me to look at my life in a newfound perspective. I am eternally grateful for every aspect of the Youth Tour because it truly is "The trip of a lifetime."

"The Youth Tour has been an extraordinary opportunity for me. It has allowed me to look at my life in a newfound perspective. I am eternally grateful for every aspect of the Youth Tour because it truly is 'The trip of a lifetime.'"

--Saul Logan

2024 Missouri Youth Tour Delegate
2024-25 National Youth Leadership Council

What you need to know

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 1-855-939-3639 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.

Looking to upgrade your home's energy efficiency? *These tax credits can help reduce the cost*

If you are looking to make upgrades that will improve your home's energy efficiency, a variety of tax credits are available to help.

Home energy-efficiency upgrades come with a lot of benefits. They can lower your energy bills, make your home more comfortable and reduce your environmental footprint. The bad news is that home energy upgrades can be costly. The good news is that a variety of tax credits are available to help reduce those costs, making home energy improvement more affordable.

What tax credits are available?

Federal tax credits of up to 30% of the cost of qualifying home improvements are available for qualifying projects. Individual projects are subject to maximum amounts, which are detailed below.

- **Air-source and geothermal heat pump HVAC systems** (\$2,000 maximum)
- **Heat pump water heaters** (\$2,000 maximum)
- **Insulation and air sealing** (\$1,200 maximum). Improvements include insulation, weather stripping, caulk and expandable foam. Materials or systems must meet International Energy Conservation Code requirements.
- **Windows and skylights** (\$600 maximum). Windows and skylights must make the ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient list, which features the very best products for energy savings and environmental protection.
- **Exterior doors** (maximum \$250 per door, \$500 total). Eligible doors must be ENERGY STAR-certified.
- **Home energy audit** (\$150 maximum). The audit must include a written report and be conducted by a certified home energy auditor.
- Tax credits for up to 30% of project costs are also available for clean energy upgrades, including solar panels, solar water heaters, small wind turbines, fuel cells and geothermal systems. Battery storage technologies are also eligible.

Only improvements made to existing homes that are the taxpayer's principal residence can qualify for these credits.

How do I claim the credits?

You can claim credits when you file your tax return. A credit is an amount you subtract from the tax you owe, which can lower your tax payment or increase your refund.

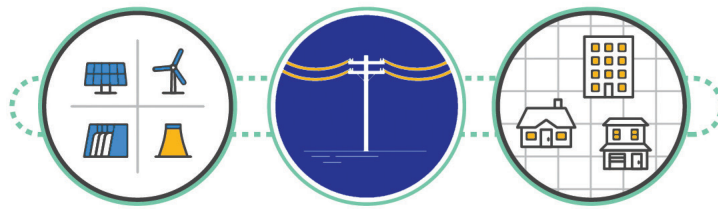
If you completed qualifying home energy upgrades last year, you can claim them on this year's return. Any upgrades you make this year can be claimed next year. These credits are available for projects installed between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2032.

Gather all relevant documents associated with your energy upgrades. To claim credits, answer appropriate questions in your tax filing software. If you file a paper return, you will have to complete a form and attach it.

For more information, go to: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-and-deductions-for-individuals> from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or contact a qualified tax professional. State and local financial incentives may also be available in your area for energy-efficiency upgrades.

A Balancing Act: ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

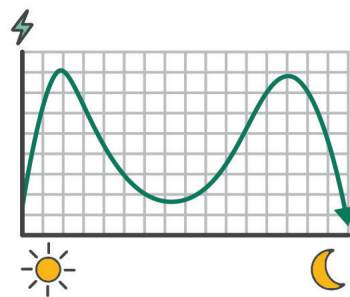
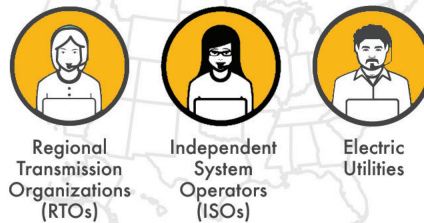
Behind the scenes, a network of people and facilities work together to ensure you have electricity when you flip the switch.



Electricity is generated at a power plant, then sent across the grid to homes, schools and businesses.

The *amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to where it's needed* are typically coordinated and monitored by regional grid operators that essentially act as energy traffic managers.

Regional Grid Operators



As electricity demand varies throughout the day, grid operators, power plant operators and electric utilities work to forecast, plan and purchase enough electricity for everyone.

Ensuring communities have the exact amount of electricity they need is a challenging task, but behind the scenes, a network of industry experts make it happen every day.



Factors that Impact Electricity Supply and Demand



- Demand Surges
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal and State Regulations

Balancing electricity supply and demand

Electricity is essential for nearly every aspect of daily life -- so essential that we rarely think about how it's produced and delivered to our homes. You might be surprised to learn that behind the scenes, a network of experts is working daily to anticipate how much electricity you need before you even use it.

We're all connected to the electric grid, so ensuring the right amount of electricity for all involves a complex process of forecasting energy demand, planning for capacity and securing enough supply to meet Americans' needs.

Powerful sources

First, electricity must be generated at a power plant using either traditional sources, such as coal, natural gas or nuclear energy, or from renewable sources, such as solar, wind or hydropower.

At West Central Electric, we work closely with Associated Electric Cooperative, our wholesale power partner, to secure enough electricity to serve our members, using a diverse mix of energy sources to generate the power we deliver to your home or business. By maintaining a diverse energy mix of coal, natural gas, wind and hydropower, AECE has options to ensure reliable power at a competitive cost.

On a larger scale, across the country, electricity supply and demand are managed through a market that includes long-term planning agreements, where electricity is bought and sold just like other common goods and services. Because WCE works with our wholesale power partner, which is also a cooperative, we are able to pool resources and expertise to deliver affordable power to our members.

Electricity supply changes throughout the day because demand fluctuates based on consumers' needs. For example, AECE knows that we need to ensure more electricity in the mornings when you're starting your day, and in the evenings when you're cooking dinner, running appliances and watching TV. Demand also increases when weather patterns change, such as extremely warm or cold temperatures.

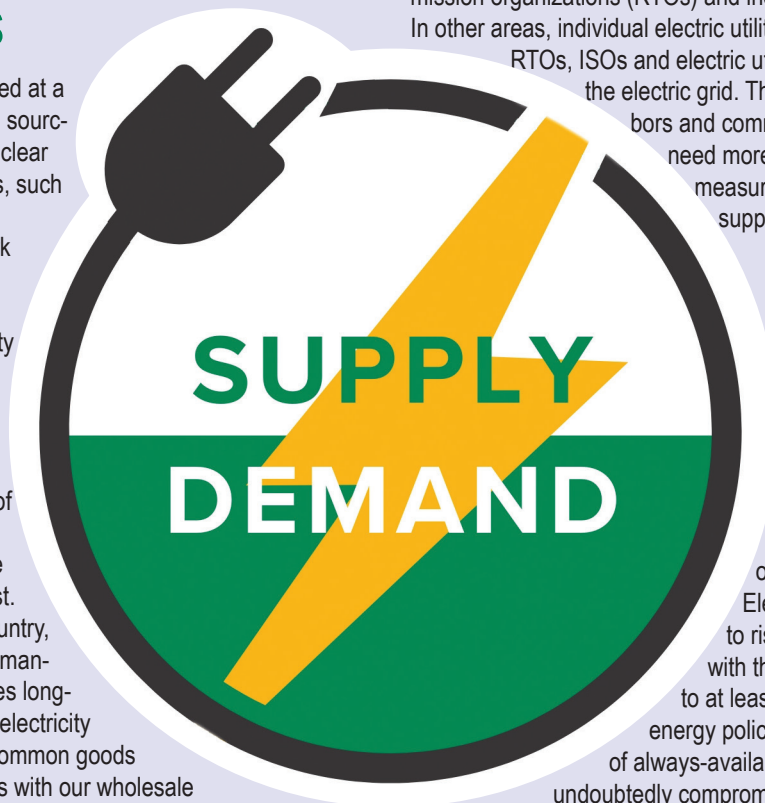
Article by Abby Berry, who writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 local electric cooperatives serving 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

Managing supply and demand across the grid

Across the country, other electric utilities are managing the same task of balancing supply and demand, which is why we have a larger network of key players in place to ensure enough power is delivered across the grid.

In most cases, the amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to specific areas are coordinated and monitored by regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs). In other areas, individual electric utilities perform these tasks.

RTOs, ISOs and electric utilities act as air traffic controllers for the electric grid. They forecast when you, your neighbors and communities across a large region will need more power. These organizations take measured steps to ensure there's enough supply to meet demand.



Looking ahead

As the energy sector undergoes rapid change, it's important for all consumers to understand the basics of electricity supply and demand.

Electricity use in the U.S. is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, with the demand for electricity expected to at least double by 2050. At the same time, energy policies are pushing the early retirement of always-available generation sources, which will undoubtedly compromise reliable electricity.

West Central Electric remains committed to providing affordable, reliable energy to the members we serve. That's why we are preparing now for increased demand and other challenges that could compromise our local electric supply. AECE is currently in the process of bringing new natural gas plants to Turney, Mo. and Ripley, Okla. to reinforce its dispatchable fleet of energy resources during times of peak demand. NW Electric Cooperative, our transmission partner, is in the process of working with other electric utilities in the Midwest to increase transmission capacity in our region to meet changing energy needs.

As a distribution cooperative, WCE is focused on everything at the end of the line including building, managing and maintaining the distribution lines that bring power from the substation to your homes and businesses. Managing the balancing act of electricity supply and demand is a complex job, and we are fortunate to have a network of utilities, power plant operators and energy traffic managers in place to direct the electricity we need and keep the electric grid balanced.



An aggressive right-of-way program has made an impact on the number of outages caused by trees into the lines.



Line Foreman Billy Mackie installs fresh batteries into a light in preparation for January's predicted ice storm.

Always Prepared

"In the rural areas, outages don't just happen during storms. They can happen when a weather event occurs, or even if a small animal is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Our job is to prepare for anything at any time," *Operations Manager Scott Gard said.*

Although January's predicted ice and snow storm did not materialize into the disaster it could have been, West Central Electric employees and crews were ready for whatever came. "Always prepared" are words to live by at WCE, and can be evidenced in many different areas.

"When a significant weather event is predicted, we take measures to make sure we are prepared for whatever might happen," Operations Manager Scott Gard said. "But in the rural areas, outages don't just happen during storms. They can happen as a result of a vehicle accident, or even when a small animal is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Our job is to prepare for anything at any time."

Preparation includes watching weather forecasts, loading trucks with materials and gas so they are ready to go in an instant, and going over safety practices with crews and employees to be ready for significant storms. Preparation also includes an aggressive, ongoing right-of-way program so areas stay clear to avoid as many outages as possible caused by trees into the lines.

"Weather is probably the most significant cause of large-scale outages, and no amount of preparation will stop a bad ice storm from tearing down lines, but we can be ready to fix things as soon as we can by always being prepared," Gard said. "We also let our members know what we are doing and what to expect through Facebook posts and videos like we did with the January storm."



Safety and efficiency

Safety FIRST

Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous! If you see one:

- Notify local authorities or your power company
- Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away, so keep your distance
- Never drive over a downed line or through water touching one
- Never try to move a downed line



5 Ways to Save Energy at Home Using Your Smartphone



Connected smart devices, smartphone apps bring efficiency to your fingertips

Looking for a simple way to save energy? Connected smart devices and smartphone apps bring efficiency to your fingertips. These days, our smartphones are practically glued to our palms. But what if you could use that screen time to save energy instead of passing hours doom scrolling on that social media app? Here are just a few of the sustainable actions you can take without putting down that trusty device:

1. Adjust the thermostat

You can use the connected app to adjust its settings if you have a smart thermostat. Manually raise or lower the temperature for comfort and energy savings, or input your daily schedule so the thermostat can automatically regulate your home's temperature.

2. Remember to change the filter

Tired of having to remember when it's time to replace your HVAC filter? There's an app for that.

Filtrete™'s app allows you to set reminders for one or multiple filters around your home, so you'll never forget again. You can also step it up a notch and opt for their Smart Air Filters, which include Bluetooth-connected sensors that can monitor air flow and usage of the filter instead of just time.

3. Turn off the lights

Left the downstairs lights on after you've already ascended the stairs to the bedroom? We've all been there. If you have smart bulbs and the connected app, however, you can correct your mistake from the cozy comfort of your bed.

You can turn these bulbs on and off, dim them and even change their color with just a few taps. Smart bulbs can also automatically adjust their settings based on a set schedule, which you can also program in the app.

4. Reduce the water temperature

Most water heaters are preset at 140°F, and the U.S. Department of Energy recommends lowering the temperature to 120°F. Lowering the temperature can help reduce the amount of money you spend on water heating. And this can be as simple as adjusting the temperature on your home's thermostat.

A retrofit smart controller lets you make existing devices smart without changing the wiring or updating to a newer model. This includes your water heater, but there are countless possibilities with this exciting new technology.

5. Turn off unused electronics

Smart plugs are an efficient solution for those home devices that simply plug into an outlet. Just insert a smart plug into the outlet, then the device into the plug, and you can turn your coffee maker, television and more on or off through the connected app. You can also create a set schedule for certain appliances and devices so they run on your preferred schedule.

Connected smart devices and smartphone apps bring efficiency to your fingertips. Just a tap or two, and you can make your home more comfortable and efficient — and save some money, too.

From the WCE boardroom

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Dec. 19, 2024

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 19, 2024, pursuant to the bylaws of the cooperative and previous resolution of the board of directors. The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Attorney Sheri Smiley caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Allen Jr., Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Dale Jarman, Robert Simmons, Colby Dowell, Stan Rhodes, Jeremy Ahmann and Elizabeth Houtsma. Also present was General Manager Michael Newland.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoeflicker presented the November 2024 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. She reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. She also gave the investment report. She presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios. She reported on interest rates, the loan draw down from CFC and the impact of large loads on the budget and projections for December margins. The RUS Loan Application was submitted.

Operations Report

Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written Operations Report. He reported on crews, and outages and causes for the month. He gave a mechanic and fleet report. He also gave a brush crew and right-of-way report. He discussed issues with fiber installers hitting line. He also reported on the outage at the Centerview Substation caused from a squirrel.

Safety and Engineering Report

Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. As of Nov. 30, 2024, employees have worked 759 days without a lost-time accident. Co-op employees drove a total of 28,169 miles as of the end of November without a serious accident. He reported on the safety committee meeting and that state-wide audits were reviewed. A material update was given.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided his written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and RoundUp updates. The Odessa High School Reality Check was participated in. He gave a net metering report. Chamber meetings attended were reported on and an update was given on the after-hours dispatch with CRC. Issues with the post office deliveries of bills was discussed. Take Control and Save rebates that will go into effect in July were reported on.



REVIEW AND APPROVE SECTION 23 OF SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section 23 of the Service Rules and Regulations were reviewed and passed as presented.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft provided the written departmental reports. An executive report was given. The tax exempt status of materials was discussed. An AECI report was also given.

NW REPORT

Simmons and Newland gave the NW Report. They discussed margins, Lone Jack, the work plan, substations, lines and poles and farm equipment. An AECI and large-load update was discussed.

POLICY AND BYLAW COMMITTEE REPORT

Jarman provided the report. Policies 3.18, 5.14 and 4.14 were presented. Policy 3.18 was tabled. Policies 5.14 and 4.14 were passed and implemented.

APPOINT NRTC VOTING DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE

Simmons was named the voting delegate and Newland the alternate.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS RATES

Newland provided a rate study done by Toth and different rate scenarios were discussed. Further discussion will be held at the board retreat in January.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley gave the legal report for the month.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. He reported on the 18 acres behind the co-op that is leased out by the co-op, and the board had no issues with extending the lease for 5 years. The NRECA International program was discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 11:30 a.m. and was out at 11:46 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT

November 2024 Statement of Operations

	This month	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Revenue	\$2,708,591	\$33,726,176	\$29,949,800
Power Bill Expense	1,897,420	20,712,174	17,448,212
Operation & Maintenance Expense	531,261	7,917,191	6,945,087
Depreciation Expense	214,267	2,315,535	2,465,354
Interest Expense	131,795	1,463,358	1,363,295
Total cost of Service (Total Expenses)	2,774,743	32,408,258	28,221,948
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(66,152)	1,317,918	1,727,852
Other Margins	19,586	315,226	614,575
TOTAL MARGINS	\$(46,566)	\$1,633,144	\$2,342,427