

October 2024



West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Electric News

Members
gather for
85th annual
meeting

Manager Newland
stresses reliability
in annual meeting
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Weather isn't only
cause of outages
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October is National Cooperative Month!

2024 Annual Meeting Prize Winners

**Grand Prize \$500
Energy Credit**
Gerald Wade

32" Smart TV
George Gleckler

\$100 Energy Certificates
Louise Thomas
Melody Baker
Clark Ring
Clayton Burgin
Carol Gibson

\$50 Energy Certificates
John Yates
Ray Grubb
Aubrey Barker
George Foster
Forrest Wrisinger
Bill Runyon
Michelle Burden
Christopher Ray
Glenn Seymour
Audra Goyette
Charlotte Smith
Raymond Boosinger

Yeti Cup
David Mayhew
Concord Baptist Church

\$25 Energy Certificates
Don Prindle
Kelvin Carlyle
Leslie Adams
Ronald Deatherage
Donald Holten
Gary Beissenherz
Bob Willard
Andrew Hoepfner
Vincent Sloan
Steven Aderman
Randall Hazen
Robert Iles

Fish-fry kit
J.S. Heins Farm

Boy's Bike with Helmet
Peter Yates

Girl's Bike with Helmet
Name not published by request

\$10 DQ Gift Certificates
Claire Stroble
Charlie Hughes
Rosie VanVickle
Joe Hutcheson

Stuffed Buddy Bears
Kaelyn Counts
Kohen Burkeybile

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 under "Report Outage"

District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

General Manager:

Michael Newland

Board of Directors:

Densil Allen Jr., *President*; Clark Bredehoeft, *Vice-President*; Dale Jarman, *Treasurer*; Robert Simmons, *Secretary*; Stan Rhodes, *Asst. Secretary*; Richard Strobel, *Director*; Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*; Colby Dowell, *Director*; Elizabeth Houtsma, *Director*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

GM Newland stresses reliability in state-of-the cooperative address

General Manager Michael Newland delivered his state-of-the-cooperative address during the Aug. 2 annual meeting. Following is the report he delivered to members that evening:

"Good evening and welcome to the 85th Annual Meeting of West Central Electric Cooperative.

"We are thankful that you have taken the time to join us tonight. For me, this is one of my favorite cooperative nights of the year, a time

where we get to see faces that we haven't seen for a year, visit with you regarding any questions you have, and to just be with those that we serve.

"As I reflected on 2023, I was filled with positive thoughts. It was my first full year to serve you as manager. Though we had many changes in our industry, our mission has not changed, as we focus on enhancing the quality of life for our members by providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in a professional manner. This is forefront in the decisions we make in the boardroom, as well as each day.



Newland

"I will give you a brief summary of things we worked on in 2023. West Central Electric continued to serve you and your neighbors by building 354 new services and adding just under 6 miles of line to your system. This is the most new services built in one year for at least the last ten years. As of July 2024, we now serve you with 15,325 connected meters.

"This growth of members as well as growth in electricity usage keeps us busy. We continue to work on maintenance and system improvements to keep your electric system in good shape. Our crews have been working primarily on new services, service upgrades, and pole change-outs. These improvements will help ensure that we have the needed capacity to serve you and your family in the future.

"We also continue our tree and brush maintenance programs. We know you care about reliability, and we do too. Over the past several years, we have ramped up the tree and brush maintenance programs, for better resiliency against Mother Nature. These programs are designed to reduce outages due to trees falling or blowing into our lines. We remain committed to reducing your outages due to trees.

"As your cooperative employees and board continue to serve you, we never lose sight of the fact that you have placed your trust in us to take care of your electric system and to also plan for the future. When planning for the future, reliability often comes to mind.

"In the news, you may hear terms like rolling blackouts and energy

Continued on page 6

ON THE COVER: Veterans and WCE members Mike Hutchko and Richard Ackerman greet each other at the Aug. 2 annual meeting.

Incumbents Bredehoeft, Jarman, Ahmann retain director positions

Three incumbents on the ballot were returned to their seats to serve three-year terms on West Central Electric's Board of Directors, during the 2024 annual meeting Aug. 2.

District 1 Director Jeremy Ahmann, District 2 Director Clark Bredehoeft and District 4 Director Dale Jarman all ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation. Two propositions up for consideration were both passed.

Proposition A was aimed at allowing a "joint membership" to be defined as something other than just a husband a wife, such as brothers, unmarried couples, joint property owners, etc.

Proposition B was aimed at tightening requirements for a director to run for or retain a seat on the board. The change disqualifies, in part, close relatives or a convicted felon from serving as a director.

Election Results:

Proposition A:	Yes -- 370	No -- 76
Proposition B:	Yes -- 409	No -- 55

At their re-organizational board meeting held immediately following the annual meeting, all officers retained their positions as voted on by the board. Densil Allen Jr. of Knob Noster will remain as president;



Directors elected: (L-r) Clark Bredehoeft, District 2; Dale Jarman, District 4 and Jeremy Ahmann, District 1

Bredehoeft of Blackburn, will remain as vice president; Jarman of Holden will remain as treasurer, Robert Simmons of Warrensburg will remain as secretary and Stan Rhodes of Corder will remain as assistant secretary.



(Above) RoundUp Foundation Board members Donna Matthews (left) and Melissa Luebbert talk with a co-op member. (Bottom right) Warrensburg Parents as Teachers representatives promote the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which offers free books monthly to all children through age five.



(Left) Members Bill and Lyla Marshall of Warrensburg await the official start of Annual Meeting 2024.



Members gather at UCM for 2024 annual meeting

A total of 559 registered members and their guests enjoyed the traditional co-op barbecue dinner, informational booths and business meeting during West Central Electric Cooperative's 85th annual meeting Aug. 2 in Warrensburg. Total attendance was estimated at approximately 1,100.

Director Election

Incumbents Jeremy Ahmann, District 1; Clark Bredehoeft, District 2 and Dale Jarman, District 4 ran unopposed, and were elected by acclamation.

Bylaw Election

Proposition A, redefining a joint membership, was approved by members, as was Proposition B, which tightens requirements to run or retain a board position.

Guest Speakers and Other Reports

Other highlights of the meeting included a presentation by Joe Wilkinson, senior vice president and chief member relations officer at Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. Wilkinson stressed that the focus of the three-tier system is to make sure cooperative members continue have reliable and affordable electricity.

"You should expect that the electricity you receive is reliable and affordable," Wilkinson said. "That's the focus at West Central. That's the focus at N.W. Electric in Cameron, who operates the high-voltage transmission in this part of the state, and that's the focus at Associated, where we run the power plants. Reliable and affordable."

He reiterated comments made by AECI CEO David Tudor, who testified recently in front of a Senate committee about those concerns.

"One of the things he said to the committee was, 'Our members expect us to keep their lights on. We survived winter storms Uri and Elliott when our neighboring utilities were forced into rolling blackouts. We survived because we have a balanced portfolio of coal, natural gas, hydro and wind. This desire to put climate change objectives ahead of reliability in the United States is a risk not worth taking,'" Wilkinson said.



WCE and John & Kathryn English scholars were recognized at the annual meeting. (L-r) Annika Riekhof, Kinley Lilleman, Lynn Dyer and Zoe Engelbrecht enjoy dinner prior to their introductions.

Members also heard from 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour delegate and Missouri's newly-appointed NRECA Youth Leadership Council Representative Saul Logan. Logan spoke about the impact that Youth Tour has had on him and his desire to serve rural Missouri and WCE co-op members through his position.



Lineman Billy Mackie and Missouri Youth Leadership Council Representative Saul Logan work the annual meeting kids' booth.

"The Youth Tour simply provides numerous kids with a newfound perspective of America," Logan told members "The Youth Tour has also affected my future plans by opening new doors in my life. My participation on the Youth Tour allowed me to be honored with this (YLC) position. Now, I am given the opportunity to lead and construct useful projects within West Central Electric, as well as the entire state of Missouri.

"And it is thanks to West Central Electric Cooperative, the members and our board of directors who wholeheartedly support this amazing program," he said.

Members also heard an address on the state of the cooperative from General Manager Michael Newland, and a report from WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. (Both reports appear in this issue.)

Other Meeting Highlights

- Informational booths by area vendors such as NW Electric Power Cooperative, AMEC's EPA campaign, Johnson County Master Gardeners, HCC Network, Johnson County Ambulance District and more.
- Warrensburg Parents as Teachers with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a program which sends free books to children monthly through age 5. DPIL has recently partnered with electric cooperatives to better reach rural children.
- Live demonstrations from WCE linemen on electrical safety and how power outages are located and repaired.
- WCE Operation RoundUp Foundation board was on hand to give members more information on the program and show how the funds collected in the past year have been used to support various community programs throughout the service area.
- Registration for prizes including the grand prize, a \$500 energy credit (won by Gerald Wade) and several energy certificates as well as other prizes.
- Kids area with glow-bracelet giveaways and registration for a girl's and boy's bicycle and helmet, DQ gift certificates and stuffed Buddy Bear friends.



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.

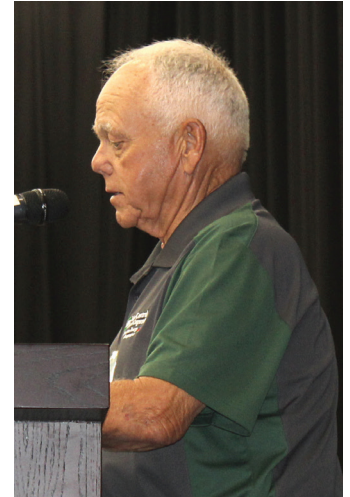
Allen's promise to members:

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."



GM Newland stresses reliability in state-of-the cooperative address

From page 2

shortages. Luckily for us, West Central Electric Cooperative is part of the Missouri three-tier electric cooperative system designed to safeguard a reliable power supply for our members through Associated Electric. I would like to thank Joe Wilkinson from Associated for his message.

"We requested Joe speak so you can hear firsthand the challenges the industry is facing from a generation point of view. We feel it's important for you to know West Central, NW Electric and Associated Electric are working together to keep your lights on. The two new natural gas plants Associated Electric is building will help ensure that. This three-tier system has no intention of allowing rolling blackouts or energy shortages on our system.

"West Central Electric planning occurs at our level as well. We are wrapping up what we call a Construction Work Plan. This is done approximately every 4-5 years. It helps us determine where we need to upgrade line due to member load, upgrade from single-phase to three-phase, system upgrades, etc. One of the items presented in this work plan is the need for us to distribute our load on part of our system. With the combined work of our engineers, NW Electric, and West Central staff, we have begun the process to add two new substations to our system. One substation will be east of Lone Jack and one will be at the Holden Power Plant. These substations will be planned and built over the next several years. Without these substations, we will not be able to serve the anticipated growth of the surrounding members in these areas.

"There are many challenges in our industry today -- regulations designed to shut down reliable coal and natural gas plants, long wait times for utility trucks and transformers, to rising costs of just about everything we buy.

"Our power cost is no different. Our power costs make up over 58% of our expenses. Over the past several years, we have incurred a lot of winter storms including the Polar Vortex in 2019, Storm Uri in 2021, Storm Elliott in 2022 and Storm Gerri in 2024. These recurring winter storms have shown the need to build additional electric capacity through additional power plants. We are thankful that Associated Electric is constructing these plants needed to keep the power on for all of us.

"In 2023, we were fortunate to have good margins. As you may know, margins are the profit that we make that is allocated back to you. However, things like winter storm Elliott have caused our power cost to go up over \$2 million this year. These are huge fluctuations for

winter peaks that we did not have in the past. The West Central Electric system is 98.9% residential, which means that our sales are greatly impacted by the weather.

"The West Central Electric team is always striving to gain operational efficiencies by maximizing our purchase quantities to reduce delivery costs or receive bulk purchase discounts, reevaluating the investments we make into our system to ensure we get the best value, and many other ways to be more efficient. However, we also are committed to reinvesting and maintaining your electric system so you and your families have reliable power that you can depend on.

"I am pleased to report that your board approved paying back more than \$1.5 million in capital credits this year. If you were a member during 2005 or last year 2023, there should have been a credit on your most recent bill or bill coming this week. To date, West Central Electric has now returned \$39 million of capital credits back to our members.

"Your elected board members are committed to their positions and stay educated and informed to make decisions to better your lives. (Board members and WCE employees were recognized at this time.)

"You may have noticed the front page of the program 'Giving you our best. Always.' These employees are the men and women that work to serve you everyday. They truly do 'give you their best. Always.' This group of employees is one of the best groups I have ever seen. They are a part of your communities. You may see one of them coaching a kid's ball game, throwing candy at a parade, or at the grocery store. We appreciate the ability to serve members in the rural communities we live in as well.

"This year especially, we have received so many positive calls, comments on social media and letters supporting our workers. I would like to let you know that your ongoing appreciation helps refuel the mission to serve you.

"Through all this uncertainty, there are a few things we can reassure you with:

1. We will always be here for you.
2. We are preparing for the future; for you, your families, and your neighbors with the help of Associated Electric investing in additional generation assets.
3. We thank you for your trust in us to provide you with electricity and never take your trust for granted.

"Thank you for attending for attending tonight's annual meeting and for being an engaged member of your cooperative. If we don't see you before next year, we'll look forward to seeing you next year!

OCTOBER

IS NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH

Celebrated by cooperatives nationwide during the month of October, National Cooperative Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, inclusive communities.

Guided by a set of shared principles and values—among them democracy, equity and solidarity—co-ops are hardwired for economic and societal transformation. Making our communities and life in general better for our members is what cooperatives are all about.

CO-OP MONTH FUN FACTS

- Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.
- Co-op Month has been a nationally-recognized celebration since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.
- The first National Co-op Month theme in 1964, was “Cooperatives: USDA Helps Build a Better America.”
- The U.S. Government sponsored Co-op Month from 1964-1970.
- Every October, the U.S. Department of Agriculture releases its annual Co-op Month proclamation.



The electric race track in the Missouri Electric Cooperatives Building at the state fair was a hit with all ages, including the Stoll kids of WCE members Wayne and Sara Stoll of Corder. (Top) Avery Nevels and Darius Stoll. (Bottom) Aurora and Isiah Stoll.



Weather isn't the only cause of outages

Animals could be to blame for outages, blinks

Most people attribute outages to storms and high winds, but there doesn't have to be a cloud in the sky or a storm in the air to cause a power outage. Although a number of outages may be caused by high winds blowing tree limbs onto lines, many times the culprit is likely to be of the furry or feathery variety.

“A lot of times we see outages on our system that we can attribute to animals climbing up on the transformers, or even wasps getting into the wrong places,” Operations Manager Scott Gard said.

Squirrels and other animals climb on equipment, such as transformers and fuses, and the equipment shuts down in order to protect the rest of the system. Animals can also be responsible for blinks.

“Sometimes repetitive blinks can be attributed to cows rubbing against guy wires,” Gard said. “They can rub hard enough that it slaps the lines together.”

WCE does what it can to reduce outages attributed to animals by installing insulated “bird wire” and wildlife protection devices to prevent animals and birds from making contact with electrical equipment. There are also devices that can also be placed on guy wires to keep the cattle from rubbing on them.

“If you see cattle rubbing on a guy wire, you can contact the cooperative and let us know,” Gard said.

Your cooperative is working hard to reduce the number of outages experienced by our members. When calling in an electrical outage, please be sure to have your map number available. It can be found



under the “service information” section located in the center of your billing statement. Outages may be reported at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942, through the SmartHub app or at www.westcentralelectric.coop.

FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM.

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held July 25, 2024

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 25, 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. Cooperative Attorney Sheri Smiley caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Allen, Robert Simmons, Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Dale Jarman, Jeremy Ahmann and Colby Dowell. Elizabeth Houtsma was absent. Also present was General Manager Michael Newland.

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 June 27, 2024; expenditures for the month of June 2024; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoefflcker presented the June 2024 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. She reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. She also gave the investment report. She presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios. She reported on the impact a large load has. She reported on TIER and interest rates. She provided the KRTAs in the board packet for the board's review. She reported on the capital credit general retirement that was processed at the beginning of the month.

Operations Report: Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written Operations Report. He reported on crews and pole inspections. Approximately 6,000 poles have been inspected to date with a 3% rejection rate. He reported on outages and causes for the month. He gave a machine and fleet report and reported on brush crews and right-of-way work being done.

Safety and Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. As of June 30, 2024, employees have worked 606 days without a lost-time accident. Co-op employees drove a total of 43,043 miles as of the end of June without a serious accident. He reported on safety meeting presentations, the district safety coordinator meeting and crew visits. He gave an engineering/staking report. He provided a construction, retirement, maintenance and operations report. He discussed new builds and new subdivisions. He reported contractors are back from storm repairs. Poles and pole treatment were discussed.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided an oral report to supplement his written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and RoundUp updates. The Lone Jack right-of-way was discussed. Annual meeting



preparations were updated on including vote-by-mail. He gave a net metering and rebate report. He reported on area chamber meetings attended.

NW REPORT

Newland and Simmons reported on the July NW board meeting. They gave an AECl report and updates on Lone Jack and Turney. They reported copper theft is up. They discussed budget amendments made on poles.

DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE REPORT

The directors who attended the AMEC director's conference gave updates on speakers. Succession planning and rate planning were discussed.

ROUNDUP FOUNDATION REPORT

Dowell provided a report of donations that was given by the Foundation.

ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Newland and Administrative Assistant Kim Lewis discussed the program and the agenda for the annual meeting. Each director is to appoint one election inspector for ballot counting.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley gave the legal report for the month.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. He reported on the state fair participation, a thank-you note received by the Missouri Co-op Family Fund, and on the annual co-op family barbecue. He also reported on the budget on new services, fleet and stock trucks. The AMEC October meeting attendance was discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

The board meeting time was discussed and it was decided to stay at 9:30 a.m. Bredehoeft updated the board on the English Scholarship and use of the interest for scholarships. The Scholarship Committee will review further.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 11:17 a.m. and adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • June 2024

	This month	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Revenue	\$3,106,814	\$17,806,455	\$16,574,605
Power Bill Expense	2,012,585	10,888,143	9,362,298
Operation & Maintenance Expense	884,891	4,241,584	3,952,813
Depreciation Expense	210,066	1,251,789	1,333,089
Interest Expense	130,205	774,414	724,612
Total cost of Service (Total Expense)	3,237,747	17,155,930	15,372,812
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(130,933)	650,525	1,201,793
Other Margins	31,937	170,399	140,585
TOTAL MARGINS	\$(98,996)	\$820,924	\$1,342,378

