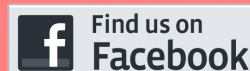




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central *Electric News*

February 2012



West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. ~ Serving our members' needs since 1939

Member Appreciation Day

MEMBER APPRECIATION...
Betty and LaVern Mueller register for one of several \$25 energy credits and a Willie Wiredhand collectible Christmas ornament given away at the cooperative's 2011 Member Appreciation Day in December. Four credits of \$25 each were given away at each office, and members who attended and paid their bill that day were eligible to register.



Congratulations to the 2011 winners!

\$25 Energy Certificates:

LaVern & Betty Mueller, Mayview
Ann Buhlig, Alma
Alan Weitkamp, Lexington
Lynn Bross, Higginsville
Betty Garrett, Oak Grove
Sam Hodge, Bates City
Marie Turner, Bates City
Barbara Connor, Napoleon

Willie Wiredhand

2011 Collector

Ornaments:

Ray Schuknecht, Concordia
Richard & Ann Haynik, Bates City

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

In our ongoing effort to provide reliable service to our members, contractors with Lee Inspection Co. are currently inspecting nearly 9,000 poles in the following locations:

Concordia Substation

(east of Higginsville and areas surrounding the city of Concordia)

Rose Hill Substation

(areas south of Holden)

Inspections will last well into 2012. Inspectors will have vehicle decals and photo badges identifying them as contractors for West Central Electric Cooperative. Questions may be directed to the Operations Dept. at 660-584-2131 or 800-491-3803.



Rising costs create pressure on stability of electric rates

For the past several months, West Central Electric Cooperative's board of directors and management staff has been crunching numbers concerning operations, service and electric rates. Although cost-saving measures have been implemented where possible, directors and management have determined it will not be possible to get through 2012 without an increase in electric rates.

"We were able to make it through 2010 and 2011 without raising rates, but unfortunately, that will not be the case in 2012," General Manager Mike Gray said. "Our board of directors is continuing to look very carefully at the numbers in order to implement the smallest possible increase while still allowing the cooperative to maintain our system and the level of service our members deserve and are accustomed to."

Gray said the main factors driving the need for a rate adjustment are an increase over the past two years in the costs to supply electricity to members without an increase in revenue.

"With environmental regulations, increases in fuel costs, increases in materials used to maintain our system -- it is just too much to absorb," he said.

Cooperatives all across the state are in the same boat, with many looking to increase rates in early 2012. West Central's increase, although the amount is yet to be determined, is set to take effect in April.

"The good news is that this will be one of the most minimal rate increases we have experienced," Gray said.

Members can watch the March issue of West Central Electric News for details on the final numbers.

"It will not be possible to get through 2012 without an increase in electric rates. The good news is that this will be one of the most minimal increases we have experienced."

Mike Gray
General Manager



Looking for information on West Central scholarships? Find out here... pages 2-3



YOUTH TOUR DEADLINE REMINDER... ESSAYS ARE DUE BY FEB. 17



Wellington Girl Scout troop learns what it is like to be an electric lineman, as well as a lesson on electrical safety...page 4

2012 WCEC and Linn State Technical College Electrical Distribution Systems Scholarship

West Central Electric Cooperative, Higginsville, Missouri, will accept applications from students interested in pursuing an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electrical Distribution Systems at Linn State Technical College, Linn, Missouri. This program provides for students a two-year scholarship in a quality college training program, a two-year college degree, and on-the-job training. General provisions of the scholarship are as follows:

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- A. Applicant should reside in the West Central Electric Cooperative service area.
- B. Applicant shall be expected to participate in an interview with the cooperative general manager and/or staff representatives in April.
- C. Applicant should be enrolled as a full-time student (12 hours minimum per semester).
- D. Applicant should be a student in good academic standing with a minimum 2.5 high school cumulative GPA, or GED with 260 minimum score.
- E. Applicant should meet minimum admission requirements of and be accepted in the Linn State Technical College Electrical Distribution Systems program.
- F. Applicant should attend Linn State Technical College commencing during the Fall semester immediately following receipt of the application.
- G. Applicant is required to complete a summer internship at West Central Electric Cooperative, the summer semester between the first and second years of the academic program.

SELECTION AND AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIP

A. Selection criteria. To be considered, applicants must forward a complete application packet by the scholarship application deadline of April 1. The criteria used to evaluate applications for award will be based upon the following:

- Academic achievement
- Civic involvement
- Leadership
- Ability to communicate clearly defined personal goals through personal goal statement (on application)
- Financial need
- Interview conducted by the general manager and/or cooperative staff

B. Selection Priority. This is a one-time annual scholarship awarded to full time students attending Linn State Technical College. West Central Electric Cooperative will determine the number of awards based on need and the number of applicants as well as the availability of funds. In the event a student is unable to fulfill the requirement of full-time enrollment for the fall semester in the year the scholarship is awarded, the scholarship may be transferred to the next available alternate.

C. Scholarship Award. The scholarship provides \$2,400 annually. \$1,200 is applied to recipient's account at Linn State Technical College in the fall semester upon the student's verified enrollment. The scholarship may be used for the cost of tuition, fees, books, tools, and/or other costs associated with a student's education. The scholarship is renewable each semester if the recipient meets the continued expectations of the scholarship, up to \$4,800 maximum per recipient.

APPLICATION PACKET

Deadline for application to assure consideration for the next following academic year is April 1. Please submit the following to be considered:

- Linn State Technical College Admissions Application.
- High school transcript or official GED score report.
- ACT scores to Linn State Technical College (LSTC ACT Code: 5105), or take the COMPASS Test on the LSTC campus.
- Complete the online Scholarship Application, including personal goal statement and two character references, at www.linnstate.edu/admissions/scholarships/apply or complete the application at www.westcentralelectric.coop under the heading "Youth Programs."

EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

A. Recipient must maintain 3.0 GPA per semester. There will be a one (1) semester probation should the student's grades fall below a 3.0 GPA. Failure to return to a 3.0 could mean loss of scholarship. Applicant will provide the cooperative with a transcript at the end of each semester.

B. Recipient must attend all classes and work as scheduled. Absences must be approved. Excessive school attendance absences may result in suspension or termination of the remainder of the scholarship benefits.

C. Recipient must comply with Linn State Technical College's student policies and rules. Failure to abide by such policies and rules may result in suspension or termination of the remainder of the scholarship benefits.

D. Recipient must contractually agree to work at West Central Electric Cooperative for four years following completion of the degree. A copy of the employment contract is attached as Exhibit A. The receipt of this scholarship is expressly contingent upon the successful applicant executing said employment contract, Exhibit A. Failure to complete the contract would mean reimbursement of the scholarship based on incomplete term. Employment after graduation will be solely at the discretion of West Central Electric Cooperative management. The employment contract may be changed or terminated at any time due to employee misconduct or if a position is not available.

E. In the event the student initially awarded the scholarship is unable to fulfill the requirement of full-time enrollment for the fall semester, the scholarship may be awarded to the next available alternate.

F. Release of Information. In submitting the application, the applicant grants permission for the scholarship committee and scholarship sponsor to review high school and college transcripts and to contact character references. Submission of the application also grants permission to promote and publicize the scholarship and recipient(s).

G. If selected, the recipient agrees to participate in ceremonies hosted to honor scholarship winners and the recipient must send a thank-you letter to the scholarship sponsor. Thank you letters must be submitted to the Foundation Office at Linn State Technical College no later than one month after award is announced.

H. Recipient must submit an official transcript to West Central Electric Cooperative at the conclusion of each semester to verify eligibility and GPA.

Submit application information to: Linn State Technical College; Attn: West Central Scholarship Committee; One Technology Drive; Linn, MO 65051

2012 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 graduates who are or were active 4-H members at the time of their high school graduation and who desire to attend college 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 at least one \$1,000 scholarship (\$500 per semester) to a student beginning his/her freshman year in college. This student may reapply for additional grants for their next three years of study. The amount of these grants will 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, creed or color.

B. The applicant must attend a high school in West Central Electric's service area, or have a parent or legal guardian who is a current West Central Electric member.

C. A cumulative 2.75 or better grade point average is required.

D. A minimum ACT score of 20 is required.

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, a county livestock specialist etc.)

G. A high school transcript must accompany the application.

H. 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 # 5 on this application.

I. 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. Winners who have not included a photo with their application will appear as "photo not available" in all publicity materials.

J. Finalists will be required to participate in an interview with the scholarship committee.

K. All scholarship applications MUST BE TYPED.

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

M. All of the above requirements, except item I, must be met for an application to be considered

IV. Application Deadline

All applications must be postmarked on or before Feb. 24, 2012. Send applications to Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

V. On-line applications

Scholarship applications are available on line at www.westcentralelectric.coop under the heading "Youth Programs." Applications may be printed and mailed, or filled out on line 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. Feb. 24, 2012.

VI. Finalist Notification

Interviews will be scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, March 21, 2012. All students applying for this scholarship should tentatively plan for an interview on this date. Those scheduled for interviews will be notified by Monday, March 12, 2012 by both phone and mail.

2012 West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship

I. Amount of Scholarship

This year, up to 20 high school seniors will receive a \$500 West Central Electric Cooperative scholarship for use at any college, university, trade or technical school.

II. Selection Criteria

A. The applicant will be selected without regard to sex, race, creed 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. A minimum ACT score of 18 is required.

E. A high school transcript must accompany the application.

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. Winners who have not included a photo with their application will appear as "photo not available" in all publicity materials.

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.)

J. All of the above requirements, except item G, must be met for the application to be considered

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 23, 2012. Send applications to: Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

V. On-line applications

Scholarship applications are available on line at www.westcentralelectric.coop under the heading "Youth Programs." Applications may be printed and mailed, or filled out on line 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 23, 2012.

VI. Winners' Notification

Recipients of the scholarship will be notified by May 1, 2012 by mail.

Scholarship money is available to area high school seniors

Each year, West Central Electric Cooperative makes an investment in the future of our communities by awarding thousands of dollars in scholarships to area high school graduating seniors.

Three different scholarships are available through WCE; the West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship, the John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship and the West Central Electric Cooperative and Linn State Technical College Electrical Distributions Systems Scholarship.

The **John and Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship** Trust is a renewable scholarship given to seniors active in 4-H. Scholarship amounts depend on the current status of the trust fund.

The **West Central Electric Scholarship** is a one-time award given to graduating seniors each year. The number of scholarships awarded depends on the availability of funds. WCE will award up to twenty \$500 scholarships each year.

The **West Central Electric Cooperative and Linn State Technical College Electrical Distribution Systems Scholarship Program** provides a two-year college scholarship to a student interested in pursuing an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electrical Distribution Systems at Linn State Technical College, Linn, Missouri. This scholarship provides for students a quality college training program, a two-year college degree, and on-the-job training.

Details on all three scholarship programs can be found in this newsletter or online at www.westcentralelectric.coop. Applications are available online, at either of WCE's two offices, from area high school counselors, or at the Jackson, Johnson and Lafayette county University Outreach and Extension Centers.

For more information on West Central Electric Cooperative's scholarship programs, contact WCE at 800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.

Scholarship applications are available from the following places:

- ◆ at your high school counselor's office,
- ◆ online at www.westcentralelectric.coop,
- ◆ from West Central Electric Cooperative's Higginsville office or Oak Grove office.

Call WCE at 1-800-491-3803 for more information.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Students entering the

2012 Rural Electric Youth Tour contest

Essays must be turned in to the Higginsville office no later than 4:30 p.m. February 17, 2012.

Essays submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 17, 2012.

Applications for the

2012 John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship

must be postmarked no later than Feb. 24, 2012.

Applications submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 24, 2012.

Applications for the

2012 West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship

must be postmarked no later than March 23, 2012.

Applications submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. March 23, 2012.

Applications for the

2012 WCE and LSTC Electrical Distributions System Scholarship

MUST ARRIVE AT LINN STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

no later than April 1, 2012.

Headquarters:
7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452
Higginsville, MO 64037
1-660-584-2131 or 1-800-491-3803

District office:
506 N. Broadway
Oak Grove, MO 64075
1-816-625-8211

Website:
www.WestCentralElectric.coop

24-Hour Number:
1-800-491-3803

General Manager:
Mike Gray

Board of Directors:
Clark Bredehoeft, President
Ron Steelman, Vice-Pres.
Paul Nolte, Treasurer
Robert Simmons, Secretary
Stan Rhodes, Asst. Sect.
Dale Jarman, Director
Max Swisegood, Director
Densil Allen, Director
Richard Strobel, Director

Get your ducts in a row...

Winter is a good time to focus indoors for efficiency

Winter is a good time to tackle indoor efficiency projects, such as taking care of your ducts — those big hoses that distribute conditioned air throughout your house. They may be out of sight, out of mind, but unless yours is a brand-new house, it's very likely you're losing conditioned air through faulty ducts. In fact, you may lose as much as 20 percent of the air in the ducts because of leaks, holes and poor connections, according to Energy Star.

How do you know your ducts are losing air?

Here are some clues:

- High winter and summer utility bills
 - Rooms difficult to heat and cool
 - Stuffiness in rooms that never seem to feel comfortable
 - Ducts in unconditioned attics, crawl spaces and garages
 - Tangled or kinked flexible ducts
- You can hire a duct specialist or do simple repairs yourself. First, fix the ones that will make the biggest difference. Seal those that are easy to see and get to. They run through the attic, crawl space, unheated basement or garage. Use duct sealant (mastic) or metal-backed (foil) tape to seal the seams and duct joints, including between the

furnace and ducts; between registers and floor, wall or ceiling; and between duct sections. Also seal ducts accessible in the heated part of the house.

Don't use duct tape for sealing, as it will dry out and fall off. There are UL-approved products in the market that will do the job of sealing and not

dry out. UL-listed foil tape and water-based duct sealant are good options.

After sealing, wrap the ducts in insulation, usually fiberglass, all the way around the ducts to avoid gaps. Also insulate hot water or steam pipes at the same time.

For more on ducts and a brochure,

"Duct Sealing," go to ENERGY STAR at http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_ducts. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/energy/residential/ducts.htm> also offers useful information.

Ducts: to clean or not to clean...

Should you clean your ducts? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates the air in your home could be up to 70 times more polluted than what you breathe as you drive to work. Dirty ducts could contribute to that pollution.

EPA also points out that even a tenth of an inch of dust buildup on a heating coil can reduce performance by 21 percent.

So, cleaning ducts may make for a healthier interior environment, and cleaning and repairing ducts should improve efficiency. Whether you or a provider does the cleaning, here are two cautions:

Don't let service personnel use a chemical biocide (considered a pesticide) or ozone on the inside of the ducts to kill

bacteria and mold. According to EPA, no products are currently registered by the agency as biocides for use on fiberglass duct board or fiberglass lined ducts.

There's not much research to demonstrate the effectiveness of most biocides and ozone, and they may cause negative health reactions in occupants.

EPA does register some products for use on the inside of bare sheet metal air ducts as sanitizers on hard surfaces, which could include the interior of bare sheet metal ducts. However, if the directions call for rinsing with water, clearly you can't use them inside ducts, where moisture could stimulate mold growth.

EPA recommends you ask the service

provider to show evidence of microbial growth in the ducts and to explain why such cannot be removed by brushing or controlling moisture.

Beware of sealants for ducts as well. EPA and other organizations do not recommend the use of sealants to encapsulate contaminants in any type of duct. Sealants may not even completely coat the ducts. They can affect the fire-retarding characteristics of the duct fiberglass, and they may contain toxic ingredients.

At www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airduct.html, EPA offers guidance on what to expect from a professional duct cleaner and a post-cleaning checklist.



A LESSON LEARNED...West Central Electric Journeyman Lineman Todd Gast explains to Wellington Girl Scouts (l-r) Marisa Merritt, Savannah Crowley and Gabby Sisson how a set of spikes aid linemen when the need to climb a pole arises. The Girl Scout Troop visited WCE headquarters in Higginsville to learn about how linemen do their jobs, what electricity is and how it is produced, and how to stay safe around electricity.