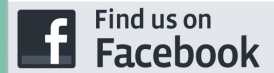




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# West Central *Electric News*

January 2012



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

**--2012 is the International Year of Cooperatives!--**

*Find out what it's all about on page 3...*



**BURNED THROUGH...** Copper theft can not only cause extensive and expensive damage to electrical equipment and poles (above) but it can also cause serious injuries and death. West Central Electric urges members to report any suspicious activity around transformers and substations to the cooperative or to the authorities.

## LIVE WIRE---

### Copper theft threatens safety, lives

Would you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

Thefts of metals like copper, bronze, and aluminum at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes, and—most dangerously—at electric substations are not unusual. The dangers, however, are very real, and range from property damage to serious injury to death.

At an electric co-op in Oklahoma last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 worth of wire in a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches, and a \$600,000 transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily left in the dark after the incident.

It's hard to understand why folks would put their life on the line for a few dollars. Many law enforcement officials believe that methamphetamine users are responsible for much of the problem. And the damage done to our system packs a big punch, since equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide.

Electric utilities use copper to ground equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to ground. Electric utilities use copper wire in substations, where we step-down high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home—either mounted on a utility pole or in a green box on the ground—low-

ers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

Our linemen are highly-trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions. To protect the public we surround our substations with secure fencing and post warning signs.

"To a would-be thief, stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make a buck," said WCE General Manager Mike Gray. "But it's illegal, it's costly, and it's not worth a life. Working with any metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, even for trained employees using proper equipment."

But some thieves will not be deterred. That's why we need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages, and save lives.

If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, or hanging wire, call West Central Electric Cooperative immediately at 800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131. If you see anyone other than our utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.



Looking for information on West Central scholarships? Find deadline information here... page 2



When shopping for lights, look for lumens not watts. New Lighting Facts Label hitting packages this month will help...page 2



WCE is looking for a few good Youth Tour and CYCLE delegates. Maybe we are looking for YOU!...page 4

**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](http://www.WestCentralElectric.coop)

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

**General Manager:**  
Mike Gray

**Board of Directors:**  
Clark Bredehoeft, President  
Ron Steelman, Vice-Pres.  
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Robert Simmons, Secretary  
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Densil Allen, Director  
Richard Strobel, Director

# When shopping for lights look for lumens not watts

When you're shopping for lightbulbs, compare lumens to be sure you're getting the amount of light, or level of brightness, you want. A new Lighting Facts Label will make it easy to compare bulb brightness, color, life, and estimated annual operating cost.

## Buy Lumens, Not Watts

We typically buy things based on how much of it we get, right? When buying milk, we buy it by volume (gallons). So why should lighting be any different? But for decades, we have been buying lightbulbs based on how much energy they consume (watts), not how much light they give us (lumens). With the arrival of new, more efficient lightbulbs, it's time for that to change.

## What's a Lumen?

Lumens measure how much light you are getting from a bulb.

More lumens means a brighter light; fewer lumens a dimmer light. Lumens are to light what pounds are to bananas or gallons are to milk—they let you buy the amount of light you want. So when buying new bulbs, think lumens, not watts. The brightness, or lumen levels, of lights in your home may vary widely, so here's a rule of thumb:

- To replace a 100-W traditional incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that gives you about 1,600 lumens. If you want something dimmer, go for less lumens; if you prefer brighter light, look for more lumens.
- Replace a 75-W bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 1,100 lumens
- Replace a 60-W bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 800 lumens
- Replace a 40-W bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 450 lumens.

## What Should I Look For?

The Lighting Facts Label.

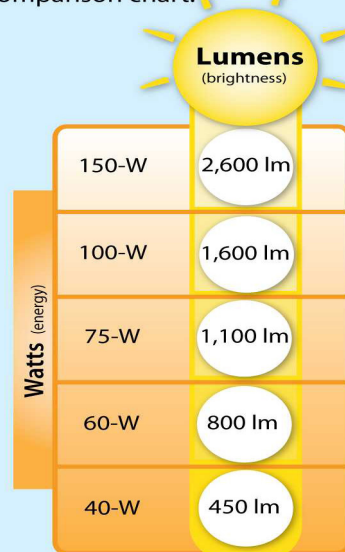
To help consumers better understand the switch from watts to lumens, the Federal Trade Commission will require a new product label for lightbulbs starting in January 2012. The labels will help consumers buy bulbs that are right for them. Like the helpful nutrition label on food products, the Lighting Facts Label will help consumers understand what they are really purchasing. The label clearly provides the lumens—or brightness—of the bulb, estimated operating cost for the year, and the color of the light (from warm/yellowish, to white to cool/blue).

To learn more about lighting options and other ways to save energy at home, visit ([www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) or [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com)).

Source: Energy Savers, U.S. Department of Energy

## What to Look for When Purchasing Lightbulbs

Instead of shopping for watts, look for lumens. Here's a helpful comparison chart.



Estimates based on typical incandescent bulbs.  
Source: U.S. Federal Trade Commission

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefit of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Mike Gray, general manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

*\*West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



**West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The Touchstone Energy® logo signifies that a local electric cooperative is among the hundreds of consumer-owned co-ops which have joined in a nationwide marketing alliance dedicated to providing superior service at affordable rates to all customers, large and small, and the communities they

## Reminders to members...

West Central Electric would like to remind members that there is no mail service to our Oak Grove Office.

Any correspondence or payments must be mailed to WCE headquarters in Higginsville to the following address:

**West Central Electric Cooperative,**  
**P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037**  
(Walk-in and night-drop box services available at both locations.)

## Scholarship information...

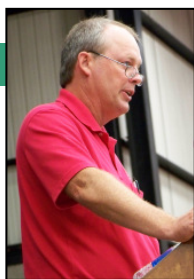
Watch the February issue of Electric News for details on:

**John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship**  
deadline Feb. 24, 2012

**West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship**  
deadline March 23, 2012

**West Central Electric Cooperative & Linn State Technical College Electrical Distribution Systems Scholarship**  
deadline April 2, 2012

Scholarship applications are available at high school counselor's offices & area WCE offices, as well as on line at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop)



## From the Manager...

# Cooperatives are the fabric of your community

Last year, the U.S. Senate—building off similar action by the United Nations General Assembly—designated 2012 as International Year of Cooperatives. As a result, cooperatives everywhere are celebrating our unique not-for-profit, member-owned and -controlled business model.

If you've read *West Central Electric News*, then you know West Central Electric is an electric cooperative—as a result, you and everyone else who receives electric service from us is a member, not a customer. Because you and your fellow members govern how

West Central Electric operates, our top priority remains providing safe and reliable service and keeping your electric bills affordable. Local control also means we're in the business of improving the quality of life in the communities we serve, from offering college scholarships to advice on how you can make your home or business more energy efficient.

Electric co-ops are just one type of cooperative operating in America. Dairy cooperatives produce nearly 90 percent of our nations' milk. Credit unions? They're cooperatives, too, with more than 8,000 across the country serving 91 million consumers. You can also find housing, hardware, and even funeral co-ops throughout the U.S.

Some agricultural marketing cooperatives have become household names: Sunkist, Ocean Spray, and Blue Diamond Almonds for example. **But we have other cooperatives right here in our local communities like MFA Inc., MFA Oil, Central Missouri AGRI-Service, LLC, Mid-Missouri Energy, FCS Financial, Show Me Energy Cooperative and Central Missouri Community Credit Union.**

Together, all of us are a key part of our local economy. We provide good jobs to folks who live right here—your neighbors and friends. We deliver goods and services that keep our communities humming. We're happy to lend a hand when we're able, and we enjoy being involved with schools and community

organizations.

At West Central Electric, we return any excess profits, called margins, to you in the form of capital credits. That money then gets reinvested locally—perhaps at a grocery store or other retail outlets, which in turn allows the owners to hire more people.

While not a new concept—Benjamin Franklin started the first cooperative, the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire, in 1752 (it still operates today!)—the cooperative form of business continues as an integral part of our lives each day.

The year 2012 has been declared the International Year of Cooperatives -- and being part of a cooperative truly is something to celebrate!

## Electric co-ops join in launch of International Year of Cooperatives

### Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

This month, electric cooperatives around the nation join other cooperative enterprises in marking the launch of a year-long celebration of the cooperative business model.

The United Nations has designated 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, the theme of which is "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World."

"Co-ops have a more than 200-year history. In the United States, the

first known co-op dates back to an

insurance cooperative formed by Benjamin Franklin. And co-ops continue today to provide a tremendous service to people throughout the world.

Cooperatives are a model of self-reliance and an example of people working together to improve their quality of life," said

National Rural Electric Cooperative

Association (NRECA) CEO Glenn English, who is a member of the National Cooperative Business Association Hall of Fame.

The nation's more than 900 not-for-profit consumer-owned electric cooperatives provide power to more than 42 million people

in 47 states.

The International Year of Cooperatives coincides with the 50th anniversary of NRECA International Programs, a partnership among America's electric co-ops dedicated to bringing power and economic development to rural villages all over the world. Since its creation in 1962, NRECA International Programs has assisted with electrification efforts that have improved the quality of life for more than 100 million people in more than 40 nations.



## Building or renovating: pushing the efficiency envelope

Whether you're planning to build a new home, renovating or repairing what you've got, there are "smart" building materials that will save energy and may earn a federal tax credit.

Start with your building shell or building envelope, which is the barrier between air conditioned or heated space and unconditioned space, including the outdoors. Tighten with efficient windows and storm windows, extra insulation in the attic and walls, light-colored roofs or metal roofs and building materials such as insulating concrete forms or structurally insulated panels.

If adding a room or building all new, take advantage of passive solar design. That means designing with south-facing windows that provide good daylighting. Adding awnings, porches, shades and trees allows solar gain in the winter but blocks light and heat in the summer. Passive solar also may incorporate large masses of stone, concrete, brick or tile, known as "heat sinks," that can absorb heat during the day, then radiate it at night.

Solar water heaters are more affordable these days as the price of photovol-

taic panels has dropped. You'll see an immediate reduction in electricity use. Traditional tank-type water heaters typically use 12 percent of a home's electricity, according to Michael Bluejay, energy consultant.

For a cooler roof in summer, use light-colored shingles or metal sheets to improve efficiency by reflecting radiant heat. Darker colors absorb heat. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) says changing to a light-colored roof can reduce electricity use by up to 15 percent. Metal roofs have been shown to absorb 34 percent less heat than asphalt shingles and can reduce energy use by 20 percent.

Another cooling option, reflective coatings, are best for areas with hot, sunny weather much of the year. The Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California estimates coatings can save at least 25 percent in energy usage.

A table at <http://www.solar-estimate.org/index.php?verifycookie=1&page=white-roof&subpage> compares the reflectance of various roofing materials and shows that a bright white coating has 80 percent solar reflectance with roof temperatures

of 15 degrees above the air temperature compared to black shingles that have 5 percent solar reflectance, with roof temperatures of 90 degrees above the air temperature. Go light!

Check out ENERGY STAR's Roof Products Program at [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find\\_a\\_product.showProductGroup&pgw\\_code=RO](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product.showProductGroup&pgw_code=RO) and comparisons of roofing products at [http://downloads.energystar.gov/bi/qplist/roofs\\_prod\\_list.pdf](http://downloads.energystar.gov/bi/qplist/roofs_prod_list.pdf).

### Here are some tips for evaluating efficient building materials:

How can you evaluate product claims? How can you be assured that the insulation or insulated concrete forms you may buy for their efficiency really do perform?

While there are always product exceptions, the occasional lemon, you can buy smart by following these suggestions:

**1. Read consumer reviews** – You can search for reviews online, but one

website used by many is [www.consumerreview.com](http://www.consumerreview.com) where you can read about product comparisons and reviews by actual users.

**2. Check ENERGY STAR** – Many appliances and home improvement products are rated by ENERGY STAR at [www.energystar.com](http://www.energystar.com). Before you buy, see if the products you are considering are ENERGY STAR rated.

**3. Talk to local buyers and users** – The vendor should be happy to supply customer references whom you can contact for recommendations and personal experiences.

**4. Look for certifications** – The product may have a third-party certification, sort of a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval — such as ENERGY STAR — that gives you confidence in the product. Also find out if your vendor and installer are certified or have other credentials to qualify them to sell or install the product.

**5. Ask for a demo** – Perhaps the vendor or installer can actually demonstrate the product's efficiency or reference a study or test that documents results.



*You could be here in 2012!*

# WCE is looking for a few good Youth Tour/CYCLE delegates

What do the schools in West Central Electric Cooperative's service area have in common? They have sent some of the best and brightest to both our nation's and state's capitals for the Rural Electric Youth Tour and the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience. If you are a high school junior this year, YOU could be a part of that, too!

## What is Youth Tour?

The annual contest for high school juniors is sponsored by West Central Electric Cooperative, which sends delegates on a six-day trip to Washington, D.C. to learn about our nation's history and government while experiencing our nation's capital firsthand.

Electric Cooperatives throughout the country sponsor delegates on the trip which includes students from more than 40 states. Cooperatives from the state of Missouri will send approximately 80 delegates. This year, WCE will send **AT LEAST THREE DELEGATES**, and, depending on the number of entries received, possibly four or five delegates.

## When is it?

This year's Youth Tour will be June 15-21, 2012. Missouri delegates will meet in Jefferson City on Friday, June 15 for a banquet and orientation before traveling by plane to Washington, D.C. June 16. Delegates and their families will also have the opportunity to participate in Family Capital Day sponsored by West Central Electric.

## What will we do?

While in Washington, D.C., delegates will have the opportunity to meet

with their senators and representatives, as well as visit historic memorials such as the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Iwo Jima and Vietnam memorials. Favorite Washington, D.C. landmarks are also on the agenda, including Mt. Vernon, the Smithsonian museums, Ford's Theatre, the Washington Monument and the Washington Cathedral. Delegates will also enjoy a moonlight cruise on the Potomac River and a MLB game or play at the Kennedy Center.

The Rural Electric Youth Tour provides a chance for high school juniors to learn about government, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives, as well as rural electrification and the impact it has had on our nation's development.

## What is CYCLE?

CYCLE is the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience which will be held July 18-20, 2012 in Jefferson City.

WCE will send **FIVE DELEGATES** to this conference sponsored by the

Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. They will join approximately 80 other delegates from across the state.

Students will hear amazing speakers, participate in team-building and leadership activities, and get a chance to debate their own bill on the floor of the Missouri House of Representatives.

For more information, contact your high school English teacher, FFA advisor, or Heather Hoflander at West Central Electric Cooperative in Higginsville at 1-800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.



CYCLE Delegate Nathan Arndt (left) of Wellington-Napoleon High School participates in an ice-breaker during the first day of the conference in Jefferson City.



Youth Tour delegates (l-r) Courtney Welch, Kaylee Herring and Dakota Ross, all of Kingsville High School, made it up to the Crow's Nest on top of dome of the Missouri State Capitol Building. Delegates and their families participate in Family Capital Day prior to leaving for Washington, D.C. the following morning.



CYCLE Delegate Lauren Thomas (left) of Kingsville High School, works with her team to build an electric cooperative during the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience.

## Contest Details:

The contest is open to high school juniors who attend a school in the West Central Electric service area, or whose parents or legal guardians are current members of WCE.

## How do I enter?

Submit a 600-word, typed essay on ONE the following topics:

"The Cooperative Difference -- owned by those we serve"

OR

"West Central Electric -- service beyond the meter"

## For more information:

Visit [westcentralelectric.coop](http://westcentralelectric.coop) and click on "Youth Programs" then "Youth Tour" to download the information packet.