



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# West Central *Electric News*

June 2012



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

With a little  
**Cooperation**  
anything is possible



## Cooperatives Build a Better World

Is it possible that someday every household in every corner of the world could have electricity? Probably not, you may say. But the thought of every farm and every household in rural America having electricity was, at one time, thought to be impossible -- that is until folks in those rural areas banded together to make the impossible happen. They found out that with a little cooperation, anything is possible!

Because of their willingness to work together to make rural America a better place to live and earn a living, the countryside was energized where it never was before. Today, there are more than 42 million people in 47 states who are served by 841 electric distribution cooperatives. That's 18 million businesses, homes, schools, churches, farms, irrigation systems and other establishments in 2,500 of 3,141 counties in the United States -- 12 percent of the nation's population!

Cooperatives own assets worth \$112 billion. They own and maintain 2.5 million miles (42 percent) of the nation's electric distribution lines covering three-quarters of the nation's landmass. They retire \$545 million in capital credits annually, and pay \$1.4 billion in state and local taxes. And, cooperatives employ 70,000 people in the United States.

Quite a list of accomplishments considering that less than 80 years ago most people thought bringing electricity to the countryside was impossible, wouldn't you say?

## Join us in celebrating 2012: International Year of Cooperatives

Electric cooperatives across the United States are joining in celebrating the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives as designated by the United Nations General Assembly.

The UN resolution, proclaimed on Dec. 18, 2009, recognizes the "diversity of the cooperative movement around the world and the role of the cooperative business model in achieving economic viability while also contributing social and community benefits."

All across the nation this year, cooperatives of every size and kind are celebrat-

ing the value of one of the greatest forms of business. You can celebrate the value of being a cooperative member by attending West Central Electric Cooperative's 73rd Annual Meeting on Friday, Aug. 3, 2012 at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg.

**West Central Electric's 73rd Annual Meeting  
Friday, August 3, 2012  
University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg**

in Warrensburg. You will hear reports about the financial state of your cooperative, and participate in the election to choose directors to serve on the cooperative board.

Cooperative enterprises really do build a better world, so join us in celebrating 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives!

## Attention WCE Members...

This year, your special Annual Meeting issue of *West Central Electric News* will be

**published in the July issue of Rural Missouri. You will receive this issue in mid-July.**

This publication is your official notice of the meeting. It will contain information on the annual meeting scheduled for Friday, August 3, 2012, as well as board candidate profiles.

**Your official registration card will arrive  
along with the bill you receive the first week of July 2012.**

This card must be brought to the annual meeting in order to register for prizes  
and vote in the board of directors election.

**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

## Summer work and play requires 'thinking safety'

Summer means warmer weather and longer days, and more time for you to be outside playing, swimming, working on the yard and all of the other activities that go with the good ole' summertime. West Central Electric Cooperative urges you to take a few minutes to think about outside safety.

Make sure children play in a safe place away from overhead power lines and pad-mounted transformers -- those "big green boxes." Teach children not to play on or around pad-mounted transformers, and to never try and enter the locked box.

Don't hang garage sale signs, bird-houses or anything else on power poles. Call us if you are thinking about installing a dusk-to-dawn light on your property. We can install and maintain the light for you on our meter or transformer poles for a minimal charge per month.

Fly kites away from overhead lines. If your kite gets caught in an overhead line,

don't try and retrieve it yourself. Call the power company.

When swimming, make sure music is played through battery-operated boom boxes, or that those plugged in are located far away from the pool area. Set plugged-in devices inside near an open window. If using artificial lighting after dark, keep power cords outside of the pool area.

When doing yard work, make sure all cords are approved for outdoor use, and all outlets are protected with a GFCI.

If planting trees or shrubs, building fences or other landscaping, contact Missouri One-Call at 1-800-DIG-RITE and have underground utilities located before you dig.

When painting the house, installing windows or anything that requires the use of a ladder, look up first and stay away from any overhead lines.

Taking a few minutes to think about electric safety will help you enjoy your summertime!



## Cooperative will return \$970,000 to members

West Central Electric Cooperative will return \$970,000 to its members in capital credits refunds in July, according to WCE Office Manager Sandy Starke.

A credit will be issued on the billing due in August for all active members. A check will be mailed to non-members the first part of July.

If you purchased electricity from the cooperative during the years listed in the box below, you should receive a check or credit. Checks will not be issued for under \$5.00.

"If a member is on our level payment program, the credit will not affect their monthly amount due," Office Manager Sandy Starke said. "The credit will be applied to the balance on the account."

"If a member has multiple accounts,

the credits will be applied based on the largest balance first, then the next until fully applied. If there are no current balances on the account, the credit will be applied to the primary account, the account that West Central has determined as holding the main membership," she said.

If a member has multiple accounts, and would like the credit applied to a different account than the one determined by the cooperative, members may call the office and request a transfer to the account of their choice.

If you do not see a credit on your account, and feel you should have, you may contact Sandy Starke at 1-800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.

### \$970,000 in Capital Credits refunded

This year, capital credits will appear as a credit to your electric account, and will be noted as such on your August billing.

Capital Credits being distributed this year include :

- ◆ 5% of NW allocations for the year 1992
- ◆ 100% of WCE's and CFC's allocation for 1994
- ◆ 15% of WCE's allocations for the year 1995
- ◆ 10% of WCE's allocations for the year 1996
- ◆ 2% of WCE's allocations for the years 2005-2008 and 2010

*If you were were a member of the cooperative during these years, you should receive a refund.*

Questions about this year's capital credits distribution should be directed to Sandy Starke in the Higginsville office: 800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.

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## Cool your AC energy bill...

# Tips for getting the most from your cooling dollars

In Missouri, given our mild winter in 2012, air conditioning will likely be the single largest energy user of the year. The average home spends 17 percent of its energy bill on cooling. But that

and new, more efficient models may save as much as 50 percent on cooling bills over your 15-year-old system, according to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.



could reach as high as 60 percent as the temperatures climb.

Here are some tips on reducing your cooling costs this summer:

**Use fans** – One of the least expensive alternatives to running the air conditioner 24/7 is a fan. Fans will make you feel cooler by up to 8 degrees, depending on speed, humidity and other factors. According to energy consultant Michael Bluejay, a floor fan uses 100 watts at its highest speed. A ceiling fan uses 15 to 95 watts. Contrast that to a window air conditioner that uses 500 to 1,440 watts or a 2.5-ton central air conditioning system that uses 3,500 watts.

**Replace old air-conditioning units with new** – Yes, this costs upfront money. But there may be incentives available

**Bump up the thermostat** – Every degree raised uses about 4 percent less energy. Start at 78 degrees. You'll discover your comfort level may be a higher temperature than you thought, particularly if you add fans to the cooling mix.

**Turn down the AC when you're away** – It's a myth that to keep the house cool, you have to keep your home air conditioning running full tilt while you're at work. Turn up the temperature while you're away, then adjust by a few degrees when you come home. A programmable thermostat can automate this process.

**Shut off unused rooms** – Don't cool rooms you're not using. If you have central air conditioning, close registers in

## When you have to run the AC

Seventeen percent of the average home's total electricity bill is from air conditioning. That's enough to provide plenty of incentive for reducing that percentage. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Department of Energy offer these no-cost ways to do that without affecting your comfort level.

Don't place lamps or TVs near your air conditioner's thermostat; the heat from the appliances will cause the air conditioner to run longer.

Shade your existing condenser with a screen or foliage so it's not in direct sunlight or place it on the north side of your house if you are adding a new unit — you may reduce your energy cost by 1 percent to 2 percent; however, don't obstruct air flow around the unit.

Remove leaves, twigs and grass cuttings from around the compressor.

Locate a room air conditioner in a window or wall near the center of the room and on the shadiest part of the house; seal gaps between the unit and the window with foam weatherstripping.

Change filters every month or as needed. Dirt can affect air flow, which can make your unit work harder.

## A fan club for fans

Let's hear it for fans! Here are some good reasons from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savers and Michael Bluejay, energy consultant, to use fans to cool down this summer. Some tips for using them most effectively include:

Fans use a fraction of the electricity consumed by window or central air conditioners. Compare 100 watts for a floor fan or up to 95 watts for a ceiling fan to up to 1,440 watts for a window air conditioner and 3,500 for a 2.5-ton central unit.

Fans used consistently and effectively can reduce the need for air conditioning as much as 30 percent.

Fans can make you feel 3 to 8 degrees cooler by blowing hot air away from your body and cooling you down. That means you can raise the temperature setting for your air conditioner by several degrees and still feel comfortable.

To feel the breeze created by a fan, make sure the blades are pushing air down. Look for a switch on the side of the fan usually between the light and the blades. Counterclockwise usually blows air down and clockwise usually pulls air up.

Fans are cheap! For about \$40, you can buy a ceiling fan, less for a floor model.

Install a whole-house or attic fan. When temperatures drop in the evening, open up windows and switch on the fan to pull cooling air through the house. Of course, when humidity rises, you may not want to pull that moisture-laden air inside.

those rooms. However, closing too many of them could affect the pressure in the system, so consult with an air-conditioning professional before you shut off lots of space.

**Block the sun's heat from entering windows** – The windows of your house may be the biggest culprit in overheating the interior of your home. While all that summer sunlight reduces the need for interior lights, it brings heat with it.

So block the heat with drapes and blinds inside and awnings and overhangs outside. Seal leaks in old windows with caulking. Put solar screens on windows, which Bluejay says can block up to 70 percent of the heat from sunlight. They're available at home improvement stores. Reflective films also can reflect heat away from windows by as much as 60 percent, per Bluejay. Finally, install storm windows and doors. Another pane of glass can cut what you lose through a

single pane by 50 percent, says Bluejay.

**Get rid of inefficient appliances** – Inefficient appliances emit a lot of heat. Old refrigerators are prime suspects. Energy Star-rated refrigerators and other appliances may be as much as 50 percent more efficient than other models and quickly can make a difference on your utility bill.

**Cut out wasteful energy uses** – Replace incandescent bulbs — which emit more heat than light — with compact fluorescents. Air-dry dishes and laundry, and wash only full loads of each. Use a microwave oven or cook outside. Lower the thermostat on your water heater; 115 degrees is comfortable for most uses. Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes. Finally plug electronic equipment, such as energy-hog televisions, into a power strip, and turn it off when not in use.

## Inspectors in your area...

Inspectors from Osmose Utilities Services, Inc. will be conducting pole and line inspections in the Chapel Hill area and areas south of Oak Grove and Lone Jack throughout the rest of the spring and summer and into the fall months.

Inspectors can be identified by Osmose logos on their vehicles and clothing, and will carry photo identification badges identifying them as contractors for West Central Electric Cooperative.

Members with questions regarding the inspections may contact the Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.



# **Congratulations** to the **2012 West Central Electric** **Cooperative Scholarship** **winners**

Wellington-Napoleon HS



Nathan Arndt  
Donald & Eva Arndt  
Criminal Justice

Wellington-Napoleon HS



Dillon Gower  
Donna Gower  
Mechanical Engineering

Center Place Restoration HS



Katelyn Mercer  
Phillip & Susan Freeze/Corwyn Mercer  
Ed. of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Oak Grove High School



Megan Ledger  
Richard & Melanie Ledger  
Pharmacy

Oak Grove High School



Shelby Drury  
Rhonda Drury  
Biology (Pre-Dental)

Oak Grove High School



Kathryn Spear  
Brad & Anissa Spear  
Sports Medicine

Knob Noster High School



Kindra Wellman  
Charles & Amy Wellman  
Nursing

Kingsville High School



Alyssa Taylor  
Gary & Edie Taylor  
Psychology

Crest Ridge High School



Bryce McMillin  
James & Melissa McMillin  
Conservation

Crest Ridge High School



Brandi Locke  
George & Barbara Locke  
Elementary Education

Crest Ridge High School



Jessie Pritchett  
William & Sharon Linnartz  
Business

Crest Ridge High School



Bailey Everhart  
Glenn & Janet Everhart  
Pre-Med/Nutritional Sciences

Holden High School



Zathary Turner  
Robert & Stephanie Turner  
Illustration

Warrensburg High School



Katherine Turnbow  
Herbert & Deborah Turnbow  
Speech Comm./Theatre Ed.

Warrensburg High School



Gabriel Richner  
David & Sheila Richner  
Interpersonal Communication

Warrensburg High School



Kendra Fox  
Michael & Karen Fox  
Actuarial Science/Mathematics

Warrensburg High School



Clinton Smith  
Dale & Luciann Smith  
Agriculture Business

Odessa High School



Cailey Dowell  
Randy & Cinda Dowell  
Biological Sciences

Odessa High School



Makenzie Koch  
Vernon & Kimberly Koch  
Journalism

Odessa High School



Kelsey Cox  
Terry & Cathy Cox  
Broadcast Journalism/PR

Odessa High School



Katherine Silvers  
Charles & Nancy Silvers  
Biology/Pre-Veterinary

Odessa High School



Elizabeth Cozart  
Howard & Laura Cozart  
Vocal Performance

Odessa High School



Christian Haase  
Patricia VanHara & Brian Haase  
Computer Science