August 2013

West Central Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

AECI keeps caring for our environment at the forefront

Focus on serving members drives AECI to be good stewards of environment and its members' resources

Balancing the responsibility of producing clean, affordable and reliable electricity has never been easy or inexpensive, but Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (your electric coop-erarive's power supplier) has never wavered from its commitment of protecting the enviromnent.

A retired rancher and former AECI board president, O.B. Clark says the best environmentalists are the people who depend on the land.

"Not to care for that upon which we depend for our living, for the resources entrusted to us, is simply ridiculous," he said.

Your electric cooperative system is filled -- from the top to the bottom -- by people who do just that: depend on the land for their living. That's why we can be trusted to make the best decisions possible to take care of it.

AECI has a history of environmental responsibility, with constant research going on to address ways to make the production of electricity better for the environment.

AECI and its members have invested more than $1 billion since 1994 to improve air quality and care for our land and water resources. More than $60 million a year is spent on environmental control measures to improve air quality.

Among the specifics...

- Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. has garnered national recognition for restoring land that today provides pasture, woodlands, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities.
- AECI has partnered to bring the first utility-scale wind farms to Missouri -- and buys ALL the power from four of those farms.
- AECI has raised peregrine falcons from the top of their power plants.
- AECI has voluntarily complied years ahead of new regulations to improve air quality.

Along with investments in environmental controls, AECI has led the way with proactive research into lower-cost, effective technologies and innovation, achieving remarkable results balanced with affordable, reliable electricity.

AECI will continue to work to make compliance with environmental regulations affordable for members. That's the reason members continue to be involved in the ongoing political debate over energy issues and environmental regulations.

AECI is owned by and provides wholesale power to six regional and 51 local electric cooperative systems in Missouri, southeast Iowa and northeast Oklahoma that serve more than 850,000 customers. AECI's mission is to provide an economical and reliable power supply and support services to its members. AECI is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

Jillian Bertz (left) and Nora Faris (right) visit with Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander during the WCE Family Capital Day tour of the Missouri State Archives. Family Capital Day, sponsored by WCE, gives students and their families a chance to visit the Missouri state capital city before delegates embark on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. the next morning. ***(Additional Youth Tour coverage on page 2.)***

Two WCE Youth Tour delegates are named finalists for prestegious Youth Leadership Council

West Central Electric Cooperative's Youth Tour delegates Jillian Bertz of Mayview and Nora Faris of Concordia were among the six finalists interviewed for the prestegious national Youth Leadership Council during their recent trip to Washington, D.C.

Once chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, students have the opportunity to apply for the YLC position. One student from each state is selected to return to Washington, D.C. in July for a leadership workshop which focuses on the electric cooperative industry. The purpose of the YLC conference is to build leadership and public speaking skills, and to enhance the delegates' knowledge of the energy industry and the cooperative form of business.

Tonia Bartlett of Boone Electric Cooperative was named the 2013 YLC representative for Missouri.

Congratulations to Jillian and Nora for being named finalists!

Missouri's Youth Tour delegation is 87 strong for 'trip of a lifetime'

What makes electric cooperatives different from other utilities is that "giving something back to the community" is part of their business plan. Why do electric cooperatives bring high school students to Washington, D.C.? Because it is important to learn about the political process to interact with your government. Students will walk away from this week a better leader and with a sense that they can make a difference.

Time and again, delegates both past and present choose the same words to describe their experience.

"To say that the Youth Tour is a 'trip of a lifetime' is no exaggeration," 2013 delegate Jillian Bertz said, referring to the common delegate-described Youth Tour catch-phrase. "I truly mean it."

In June, Bertz, who will be a senior at Odessa High School this fall, joined fellow WCE delegates Lanae Goth of Crest Ridge High School, Nora Faris of Concordia High School and 84 other youth from across Missouri, on the national Rural Electric Youth Tour. The tour brought together more than 1,500 high school seniors from across the nation.

More than 40,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this unique program, with participants going on to become doctors, teachers, aircraft designers and even top legislators in the U.S. Senate. Delegates also return with a new appreciation of America and her history.

"There were so many amazing places, it's hard to choose which was my favorite," Goth said. "I absolutely loved Arlington National Cemetery. It was unbelievable seeing all those people who sacrificed their lives for our country. And, the changing of the guard was incredible."

Bertz said her most treasured souvenirs from the trip were much more than the material things that money can buy -- such as a chance meeting with two war veterans near Arlington National Cemetery.

"While at the Iwo Jima Memorial, we were able to visit with two marines who had been stationed in Afghanistan. One of them was a double-leg amputee, and the other was a single leg amputee; both were upbeat and positive despite their handicaps," she said. "They were very grateful to fight for our country, and appreciated that we were spending time in our Nation's capital to learn more about how others had also served."

WCE has sent 46 area students to our nation's capital since restablishing the Youth Tour program at the cooperative in 1992.

"This was definitely the trip of a lifetime," Goth said. "I made so many friends who will be friends forever, and it was so hard leaving and knowing I won't see them for a long time.

"I can't thank West Central enough for giving me the opportunity to go on this absolutely incredible trip. It was amazing," she said.

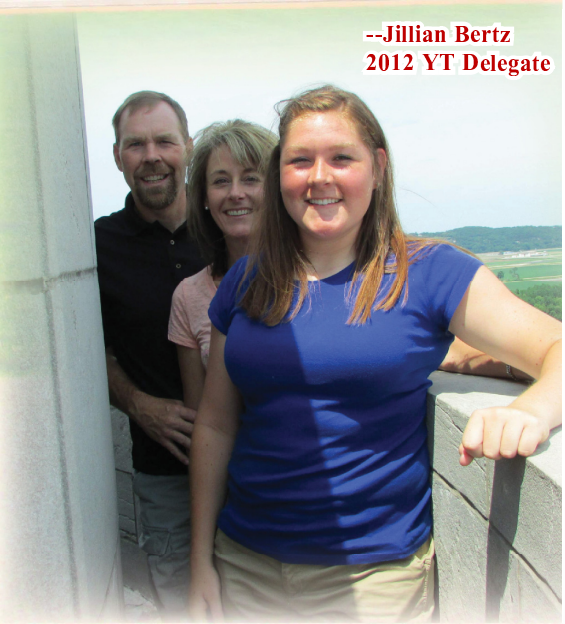
WCE Youth Tour delegate Lanae Goth looks at a display in the Misouri State Highway Patrol Headquarters during Family Capital Day in Jefferson City.

"The Youth Tour was a very moving experience. From being in our Nation's capital, to having the opportunity to travel with so many great people, I was able to grow new friendships and expand my perspective on how important the role of rural electric cooperatives is in our community. Thank you West Central Electric making this the trip of a lifetime!"

--Jillian Bertz
2012 YT Delegate

WCE Youth Tour delegate Nora Faris practices her interviewing skills on camera at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

WCE Youth Tour delegate Lanae Goth (left) and her new friends find the Smithsonian Museums entertaining during the 2013 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.



WCE Youth Tour delegate Jillian Bertz (front) and her parents, Greg and Kim Bertz, enjoy the view from the "crow's nest" high atop the Missouri State Capitol Building in Jefferson City. A VIP tour of the Capitol Building was on the Family Capital Day agenda before delegates embarked on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

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WCE Life Support Equipment list will be updated

In an effort to better serve its members, West Central Electric Cooperative updates the Life Support Equipment List each year.

"Although we add new entries to the Life Support Equipment List as members call and request to be placed on the list, we seldom get members calling to let us know they need to be removed," Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander said. "In an effort to keep the list as up-to-date as possible, we create a new list every year."

Members are asked to fill out the following form, and mail it to West Central Electric NO LATER THAN August 31, 2013 to ensure their name appears on the new list.

The Life Support Equipment List is used by cooperative personnel in the event of a planned outage, for example, during extensive repairs or maintenance. The list is not used as a priority list to get service turned back on in the event of an outage.

"The reason this is not a priority service list is because in the event of an outage, repairs have to be made in a certain order," Line Superintendent Randy Burkeybile said. "It does no good to go out and repair an individual service when the main line is down. Until the main line is repaired, there won't be any power to the individual line."

If your name needs to remain on the WCE Life Support Equipment List, You MUST fill out the following form and mail it to West Central Electric Cooperative before August 31, 2013, or your name will be removed from the current list.

Members requesting their name be placed on the Life Support Equipment List should mail the following form to the Higginsville office. If you or a family member is on oxygen, please let us know how many hours of back-up you have available.

Please keep in mind that if we do not hear from you by August 31, 2013, your name will be removed from the current Life Support Equipment List.

Request for 2013-14 Life Support Equipment List inclusion

(Please fill out all information completely.)

Name to appear on list:_____

Name on WCE account:_____

Account Number:_____ Location Number:_____ Phone Number:_____

Life support equipment requiring electricity to operate:_____

If on oxygen, how many hours back-up?_____

Please fill out all information completely and mail to Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

REMINDER TO OUR MEMBERS...

- **2013 capital credits will appear as credits on your August billing statement.**
- **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 (that holds the main membership).**
- **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.**
- **Members who purchased electricity from the cooperative in 1992, 1993, 1995, 2005 or 2006 may receive capital credits. 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.**

West Central Electric Cooperarive offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 2 in observance of Labor Day. Have a safe holiday!

End one of your home's biggest potential energy drains

Windows are one of the biggest potential energy drains. Some authorities claim as much as 30 percent of a home's heat loss in winter may come from leaky windows. The same can be true of summer energy drains.

Now's a good time of year to evaluate your windows. Start with a home energy audit (your cooperative may offer the service or point you in the right direction). The audit will identify if you have a problem or not. You definitely have a problem if you have any single-paned windows, little or no weatherstripping or caulking and no window coverings. You might as well leave the door wide open if you're guilty of these conditions!

Here are suggestions from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Iowa Energy Center for maximizing window efficiency:

UPGRADE – Replace old windows with ENERGY STAR-qualified ones appropriate for your climate zone. They can reduce energy bills by 7 to 24 percent compared to nonqualified windows. ENERGY STAR windows not only keep unconditioned air out, but they also serve as a sunscreen to protect valuables from fading ultraviolet light.

ADD STORM WINDOWS – Storm windows, whether interior or exterior or even plastic sheeting, can make a real difference in comfort and utility bills. Interior storms are more convenient to install and remove, particularly in multi-story houses and apartments, and require less maintenance. And they also seal more tightly.

CAULK AND WEATHERSTRIP – The Iowa Energy Center recommends if you have combination storm windows to caulk around the windows where the metal storm window frame meets the window's frame but not to seal the moisture weep holes at the bottom of the frame. For wooden storm windows, use nonpermanent, nonstaining rope caulk to seal around them. Weatherstripping adds extra protection against leaks.

PLANT A TREE – Strategically planting deciduous trees near south-, east- and west-facing windows will provide needed shade in the summer but let in the sun's heat during winter.

PULL THE DRAPES – Drapes — depending on style and fabric — can cut heat loss and gain through windows. Two drapes hung together create a tighter air space than one. For summer, close drapes on windows receiving direct sunlight to reduce heat gain. Studies show medium-colored drapes with white-plastic backings can reduce heat gains by 33 percent. In winter, closed drapes can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent. So for winter nights, close the drapes.

To maximize efficiency, hang drapes as close to windows as possible to reduce heat exchange or convection. Let them fall onto a windowsill or floor. Install a cornice at the top of a drapery or place the drape against the ceiling. Then seal the drapery at both sides and overlap it in the center. You can use Velcro or magnetic tape to attach drapes to the wall at the sides and bottom. If you do these things, you may reduce heat loss or gain up to 25 percent.

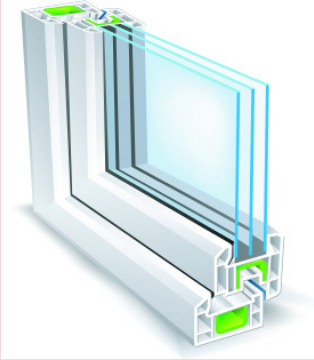
Window efficiency can save big money

Tax credits are available for efficient windows

You may be able to claim up to 10 percent of the cost to a maximum of $200 in tax credits for energy-efficient windows, doors and skylights through Dec. 31, 2013. Check with your tax advisor to be sure of eligibility and if eligible, complete IRS Form 5695 and file with your 2013 tax return. Include the manufacturer's certification statement. Qualifying criteria are:

- Must be ENERGY STAR qualified
- Does not include installation costs
- Must be installed on existing home and primary residence; new construction and rentals don't qualify
- Up to 10 percent of purchase price, not including installation cost

Here's a link to more detail: www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=tax_credits.tx_index.



Dress up windows and save energy

There are all kinds of ways to cover, shade and insulate windows attractively and save heat loss or gain in the process. Generally, insulating shades, drapes, shutters, awnings and screens can be pulled tight to keep sunlight out during the day. In winter, open the treatments to let sunlight in during the day and close again at night.

Here are some types of window treatments the U.S. Department of Energy recommends:

REFLECTIVE FILMS – High-reflectivity window films help block summer heat gain, BUT they also block the sun's heat in winter. So they make more sense for southern areas in Missouri than for northern areas. Keep in mind films may impair outside visibility and may take extra care in cleaning them.

AWNINGS – Window awnings can reduce solar heat gain in the summer by up to 65 percent on south-facing windows and 77 percent on west-facing windows. You can use an awning to shade one window or have an awning custom-made to shade the entire side of your house.

Awnings now come in synthetic fabrics that are water-repellent and treated to resist mildew and fading. Whatever the fabric, choose one that is opaque and tightly woven. A light-colored awning will reflect more sunlight.

Awnings require ventilation to keep hot air from becoming trapped around the window. Grommets (eyelets) or other openings along the tops and sides of an awning can provide ventilation.

BLINDS – Vertical or horizontal slat-type blinds are more effective in reducing summer heat gain than winter heat loss. Interior blinds are most common and when completely closed and lowered on a sunny window can reduce heat gain by as much as 45 percent.

INSULATED PANELS – An insulating window panel or pop-in shutter typically consists of a core of rigid foam board insulation that you push or clip into the interior of a window. The panels are made so their edges seal tightly against the window frame. Seals can be made from magnetic tape or Velcro. Panels have R-values between 3.8 and 7.

MESH WINDOW SCREENS – Mesh window screens can diffuse solar radiation, reducing heat gain in summer. Mount them in an exterior frame to cover entire windows. They are particularly effective on east- and west-facing windows.

DRAPES – Depending on style and fabric, drapes can cut heat loss and gain through windows. Two drapes hung together create a tighter air space than one. Close drapes on windows receiving direct sunlight to reduce heat gain in summer. Studies show medium-colored drapes with white-plastic backings can reduce heat gains by 33 percent. In winter, closed drapes can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent. So for winter nights, close the drapes.

To maximize efficiency, hang drapes as close to windows as possible to reduce heat exchange or convection. Let them fall onto a windowsill or floor. Install a cornice at the top of a drapery or place the drape against the ceiling. Then seal the drapery at both sides and overlap it in the center. You can use Velcro or magnetic tape to attach drapes to the wall at the sides and bottom. If you do these things, you may reduce heat loss or gain up to 25 percent.

STORM WINDOWS – Whether interior or exterior or even plastic sheeting, these windows can make a real difference in comfort and utility bills. Interior storms are more convenient to install and remove, particularly in multi-story houses and apartments, and require less maintenance. And they also seal more tightly.

OVERHANGS – Properly sized and installed roof overhangs for new construction can most effectively shade south-facing windows from the summer heat. If oriented properly, overhangs will allow the sunlight in through the windows during the winter, providing more warmth to a house.

SHADES – When properly installed, window shades can be one of the simplest and most effective window treatments for saving energy. Mount them as close to the glass as possible with the sides of the shade held close to the wall to establish a sealed air space. Lower shades on sunlit windows in the summer, and raise them on south-facing windows in winter during the day. For greater efficiency, use dual shades — highly reflective (white) on one side and heat-absorbing (dark) on the other side — that can be reversed with the seasons.

SHUTTERS – Window shutters can help reduce heat gain and loss. Interior shutters need a clear space to the side of the window when they're opened. Properly designed exterior shutters may provide the best possible window insulation system.

Like window blinds, louvered shutters work best for summer shading. They won't provide much insulation against heat loss in the winter.

STORM PANELS – A storm panel, either interior or exterior, added to a single-pane window can reduce winter heat loss by as much as 50 percent. They also are less expensive than double-glazed windows.