



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# West Central *Electric News*

June 2013



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



NO, YOUR EYES DO NOT DECIEVE YOU...Cooperative members woke up on the morning of May 3 to several inches of snow blanketing the area. Lineman Jesse Underwood works with a hotstick to remove a tree branch from a power line.

## Rare May snowstorm caps wild winter in central Missouri

We had to see it to believe it, but there it was, all over the ground and trees on the morning of May 3...snow... again!

The warnings came in earlier in the week, but many thought it wouldn't really happen.

The first calls began shortly before midnight May 2, and continued into the night. Heavy, wet snow accumulated on trees, which had new growth from the spring weather just days before. Sagging limbs and snow falling from trees and lines caused outages to peak at 2,600 and hover at more than 2,000 for

much of the day as crews fought a losing battle.

"This is unprecedented for us," General Manager Mike Gray said.

Although the problems in the west central area of the state were many, other areas didn't have a flake.

"When I called (Platte-Clay) to ask for some help, they thought I was joking," Gray said.

Several crews from Platte-Clay, Co-Mo and Central electric cooperatives arrived to help, and power was restored to all members by late afternoon May 4.

## Why it is important to have your map or account number when calling

If you have called the cooperative to report an outage, or pay your bill, you were asked to provide your map location or account number. There are several reasons this information is important and needs to be available to us when you call.

When reporting an outage, your map number is how we call up the exact location that is out of power. This number is important because it tells us exactly which location is out of power, as some members have more than one meter. Your account number is also important because it tells us which account you are paying. Some members have the same name, but these numbers are unique to you and your particular location.

Both numbers can be found in the "Account Information" section located in the center of your bill.

Please remember that WCE's 1-800 number is an in-state toll-free number ONLY. If you are dialing in from out of state, or using a cell phone with an out-of-state area code, you will need to dial the local number 660-584-2131.

When reporting an outage online or paying your bill online, you must also have this information available. Outages may be reported on our website at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) by clicking on the "Current Outages" tab at the top of the home page. During an extensive outage, that page will load as the home page. Please have your account number ready, as you will have to enter that number in order to report your outage online.

Please DO NOT report an outage on the cooperative's Facebook page, or leave a message on the West Central Services internet line.

## 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 scheuled for Friday, August 2, 2013, as well as board candidate profiles.

**Your official registration card will arrive along with the bill you receive the first week of July 2013.**

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

# Electrical safety vacation checklist

Summer vacations are hard to pull off these days, so it's important that trip-takers have peace of mind while away. Fires can start when lightning storms strike electronics or small appliances; burglaries tend to increase because folks aren't at home.

The electrical safety checklist below will help you decrease the risk of prob-

lems occurring while on vacation:

1. Turn off all electrical appliances, including toaster ovens, stoves, and curling irons.
2. Unplug television sets and computers—these items are especially susceptible to lightning and power surges.
3. Use a timer on indoor lights. Look for one that can be set to a random pat-

tern rather than regular times throughout the day.

4. Install motion-detecting lights outdoors.
5. Set the thermostat to 80 degrees in the summer and 55 degrees in the winter if you plan to leave for an extended period of time.
6. Give your house key to a neighbor

and make sure he or she has a phone number where you can be reached.

*Source: National Sheriffs' Association*  
Christine Smith writes on electrical safety for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

## Cooperative will return \$1.2 million to members

West Central Electric Cooperative will return \$1.2 million 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," 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.

### \$1.2 million in Capital Credits will be refunded in 2013

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 :

- ◆ 100% of NW allocations for the year 1992
- ◆ 100% of NW allocations for the year 1993
- ◆ 5.8% of WCE's allocations for the year 1995
- ◆ 10% of WCE's allocations for the year 2005
- ◆ 10% of WCE's allocations for the year 2006

*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.



Turn your air conditioner off or set the temperature higher when leaving for vacation.

## Energy efficiency doesn't take a vacation

You packed the bags, loaded the car and found someone to feed the goldfish. But when you return from your fun in the sun, will an unwelcome guest be lurking in your mailbox?

Many otherwise thrifty electric co-op members do a great job planning their trip, but forget to include energy efficiency in their itinerary. Your home will continue to use electricity while you are away, perhaps leading to an electric bill that's more than you expected — unless you turn off unneeded energy-users.

Here's a few things to consider before you leave on that vacation of a lifetime:

- Turn the air conditioner off or at

least to a higher setting before you leave.

- Turn off the water heater. It is one of the largest users of electricity in your home. Just make sure you leave a note to turn it back on as soon as you return, or face a cold shower the next morning.

- Unplug TV sets, satellite receivers, stereos, cell phone chargers, computers and any other devices that might use electricity even when off. This includes appliances with digital clocks.

- Now might be a good time to clean out the refrigerator. Consider asking a friend to take staples such as condiments while you are gone so you can turn it off.



DEADLY SITUATION...A power pole sits obliterated from a lightning strike in a northern Johnson County field after copper thieves stripped it of a minimal amount of copper wire. Lightning dissipates to the easiest path to ground, which is through the grounding wire. With this wire gone, the lightning traveled through the pole exploding it into splinters. The strike traveled through and destroyed three poles along this line. For a few dollars' worth of copper, the thieves put their lives in danger, and left cooperative members with the bill for three new poles, hardware and the cost of several linemen to spend hours repairing the damage.

*Happy Father's Day!*

## Fathers power our community

All little boys want to be just like Dad, and all little girls look up to their daddies as their heroes. The children of West Central Electric look up to their daddies, too -- about 40 feet up.

Fathers at WCE work in rain and snow, day and night, when duty calls. If a storm triggers an outage, these fathers don't play board games by candle light or read bedtime stories by flashlight. They charge into the fray to fix what is broken.

Some dads work in the eye of the storm while others take action behind the scenes taking calls and logging in outages, tracking problems and directing crews to trouble spots. Working together, these brave men restore power to our community. You can hear their children cheering them on.

The children of WCE grow up with men who dedicate their lives to connecting neighbors to comfort. It's not an easy job. The hours are long, and tasks are dangerous. But the payoff -- mak-



Oak Grove Lineman Brandon Steffen and son, Jax

ing life better for all of us -- fuels these resilient men.

So, just in time to celebrate fathers, let's honor the fathers who keep our community strong. Happy Father's Day!



APRIL SHOWERS BROUGHT US WHAT?...Some of the problems caused by May's surprise snowstorm, like a raveled wire, were not just an easy fix. **Top photo:** A piece of electrical wire as it normally appears. **Bottom photo:** What happens when a vehicle snags a low-hanging electrical wire, causing it to ravel.



**Congratulations**  
to the  
*2013 West Central Electric  
Cooperative Scholarship*  
**winners**

Oak Grove High School



Jacob Fallman  
Gerald Fallman & Renee Fallman  
Political Science & Economics

Oak Grove High School



Kaitlyn Pavlica  
Troy & Selinda Pavlica  
Early Childhood/Elem. Ed.

Oak Grove High School



Corey Bolin  
Randall & Carol Bolin  
Safety Management

Knob Noster High School



Katherine Tobias  
Darrin & Patty Tobias  
Early Childhood/Elem. Ed.

Knob Noster High School



Troy Kyser  
Robert & Allison Kyser  
Athletic Training

Crest Ridge High School



Kayla Goth  
Chris & Becky Goth  
Medical Administration

Crest Ridge High School



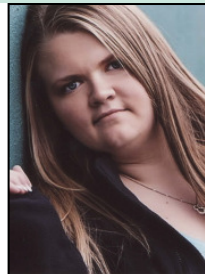
Magen Cross  
Kecin & Monica Cross  
English Education

Warrensburg High School



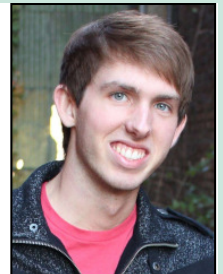
Brett Marr  
Steven & Wendy Marr  
History/Math/Phys. Ed

Warrensburg High School



Savannah Chambers  
Michael & Tobi Chambers  
Forensic Science

Holden High School



Skyler Aldrich  
Don & Tina Aldrich  
Biology

Lafayette Co. C-I High School



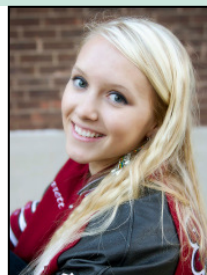
Dylan Schlatter  
Walt & Kim Schlatter  
Aerospace Engineering

Fort Osage High School



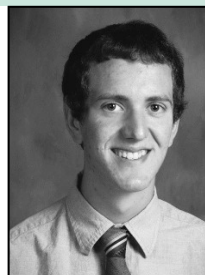
Lynn Siefker  
Chris & Pat Siefker  
Exercise Science

Fort Osage High School



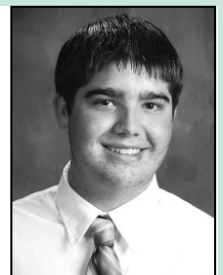
Mariah Garrett  
Brian & Marne Garrett  
Dental Hygiene

Odessa High School



Isaac Berry  
Tim & Rita Berry  
Finance

Odessa High School



Nathan Kleoppel  
Joseph & Jeanette Kleoppel  
Aircraft Systems/Computer Sci.

Odessa High School



Angela Brown  
Kevin & Deana Brown  
Social Studies Ed.

Odessa High School



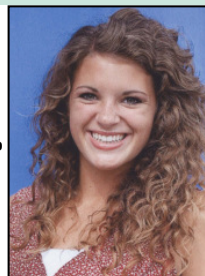
Rachelle Engen  
Paul & Tammy Engen  
Pre-Law/Political Sci./English

Odessa High School



William Monroe  
Bill & Janice Monroe  
Business Management

Odessa High School



Morgan Whitlock  
Marcus & Brenda Whitlock  
Kinesiology/Business Admin./PT

Odessa High School



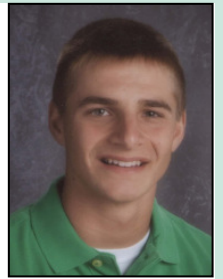
Evan Young  
Brian & Stephanie Young  
Design & Drafting Technology

Wellington-Napoleon HS



Logan Manning  
John & Lisa Manning  
Computer Science

Wellington-Napoleon HS



Brandon Niendick  
Vincent and Tina Niendick  
Ag Science/Business