



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central *Electric News*

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

Board president Bredehoeft says WCE powers our communities and empowers members

WCE Board President Clark Bredehoeft wasn't around 74 years ago when the founders of West Central Electric Cooperative started on a mission to bring electricity to the area's rural communities. But, as



Bredehoeft

a cooperative board member for the past 22 years, he has seen how that mission has evolved to include not only powering our communities, but also empowering our members.

"It truly is a much different world today than it was in 1939," Bredehoeft told the members gathered for the 74th annual meeting Aug. 2 in Warrensburg.

Bredehoeft spoke of the changes that have taken place within the cooperative over the past seven decades -- from the advances in technology and safety that have made WCE a more efficient and safer place to work, to the multiplying of members and miles of line. One thing he said that has remained a constant throughout the past 74 years, however, is the cooperative's commitment to making a better life for the members.

"As the years progressed, your cooperative leaders continued to power our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity, but they also realized that taking an

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HOW STUFF WORKS...
WCE Lineman Pete Nelson answers a member's questions about meter bases and installing a generator during the cooperative's 74th annual meeting Aug. 2 in Warrensburg.

Gray tells members cooperative is wrapping up 74th year in good shape

Members pass one bylaw amendment, defeat proposed adjustment of district line

West Central Electric Cooperative's 74th annual meeting is one for the books, with more than 700 registered members and more than 1,500 in attendance. During the business meeting, members considered two bylaw amendments, and elected a new director from the newly-formed District 4.

Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Members passed a bylaw amendment 444-138 regarding the election of former co-op employees to the board. The amendment proposed by the board of directors added language to the director qualifications that states no person shall be eligible to become a director if that person has been an employee of the cooperative within the past three years.

A second board proposal regarding

district boundaries was defeated 431-145. Prior to the vote, several members participated in a discussion which included comments both in favor of and opposed to the amendment.

This proposal by the board adjusted district boundaries set last year in an amendment brought forth by petition and approved by the membership. The proposal would have set the boundaries between District 1 and District 2 at the Lafayette/Jackson county line. It would have also adjusted the number of directors from the districts, setting District 2 (which covers the entirety of Lafayette County) at three directors, and District 1 (which covers only the far eastern portion of Jackson County) at one director.

Members also participated in the election of directors. Incumbents Max Swisegood and Stan Rhodes were elected to serve three-year terms. Sandra Streit was elected to represent the newly-formed District 4. (See related story on page 2.)

Manager's Report

In his annual report to the members, General Manager Mike Gray reported that the cooperative is in good shape, and that board and management continues to upgrade and improve the system. He updated members on operations and maintenance as well as the overall financial state of the cooperative.

Under Operations, he reported that 118 new services were added to the system in 2012, which was an increase from 2011's 97. To date in 2013, the cooperative has added 52 new services, which is average for the past few years.

Gray told members that maintenance and system upgrades continue as recommended by the cooperative's consulting engineers.

In 2012, crews changed out more than 300 poles and replaced 20 miles of conductor, he said.

Gray also briefed members on the new construction work plan approved by the

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General Manager:
Mike Gray

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

Bredehoeft says WCE powers our communities, empowers members

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active approach to empowering our members was just as important.

Bredehoeft spoke of how WCE joined the Rural Electric Youth Tour program in the 1960s, and to date has sent 71 students from our service area to Washington, D.C.

"This has not only broadened their horizons and expanded their opportunities, but it also empowered them to become successful leaders.

Bredehoeft also mentioned the cooperative's three scholarship programs which have awarded more than \$190,000 to area students to further their education.

He spoke of the cooperative's answering the cry of its members several years

ago to help them get high-speed internet service by forming a subsidiary company, West Central Services, LLC, to do just that.

Bredehoeft told members that as of Aug. 1, the cooperative has returned a total of \$21.9 million in capital credits to its members.

Other programs through which WCE empowers its members includes sup-

porting area senior centers' Miles For

"As the years progressed, your cooperative leaders continued to power our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity, but they also realized that taking an active approach to empowering our members was just as important."

--Clark Bredehoeft, WCE Board President

Meals; sponsoring activities like Project Graduation and annual back-to-school fairs which provide

school supplies to area students who need them; providing safety and efficiency programs to schools, businesses and community groups, empowering them to make decisions to lower their

electric bills and eliminate dangerous situations and providing a rebate program to assist members in installing energy-efficient equipment in their homes.

"Each year at Christmas, your directors support an area charity, and employees of the cooperative adopt a needy family and provide Christmas gifts and food," he said.

"Throughout the years and throughout these various efforts, your electric cooperative has done its part to improve the everyday life of its members," Bredehoeft said. "So, even though the original focus of the cooperative was powering our communities, it is empowering our members that keeps us strong."

Incumbents retain seats, Streit elected in new Dist. 4

West Central Electric members re-elected District 1 incumbent Max Swisegood and District 2 incumbent Stan Rhodes during the Aug. 2 annual meeting at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. Sandra Streit was members' choice for director in the newly-formed District 4.

Swisegood and Rhodes both ran unopposed. Streit (332), of Holden, defeated Darlene Buckstead (238), also of Holden.

Directors met immediately following the announcement of election results to

elect officers for the coming year.

Densil Allen of Warrensburg, will take the helm as president. Clark Bredehoeft of Blackburn, will serve as vice president; Robert Simmons of Warrensburg will remain as secretary; Rhodes of Corder will remain as assistant secretary and Paul Nolte of Higginsville will remain as treasurer.



Allen



Directors elected for a three-year term include (l-r) Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit and Max Swisegood.



(Top photo) Eleanor Swezy (left), of Pittsville, and Margaret Cunningham (right) of Lee's Summit, enjoy an old-fashioned co-op barbecue dinner. (Bottom photo) Parker Marriam, 10 of Colorado, takes a break in the pool during the WCE annual meeting. Parker was visiting his grandparents, cooperative members Gene and Doris Hubbard of Oak Grove.

Members elect directors, consider by-law changes

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board of directors in May.

"This new construction work plan, recommended by our engineers, lays out needed improvements and upgrades to our system for the next five years," he



WCE General Manager Mike Gray reports on the state of the cooperative.

said. "Growth may have slowed, but the need to replace and upgrade poles and conductors on our system is an on-going process."

Gray reported that several hundred miles of line on the system is the origi-

were capital credits from our power supplier Associated Electric Cooperative."

Gray said temperatures closer to normal this year have kept averages closer to expected kWh sales.

"I think rates for 2014 will remain steady for members," he said. "There will be an increase to the cooperative, but we don't know the amounts yet. My hope is the increased cost will be small enough we can absorb it without having to raise WCE's rates to members."

Gray said he will have a better idea of where the cooperative stands in that area as the year winds down.

Customer Service

Gray described the new outage reporting option, which allows members to report outages on the cooperative's website if phone lines are busy.

"Since more and more people now use smart phones, some members prefer to communicate with us online," he said.

Gray also mentioned the cooperative's Facebook page, which posts information about the latest news and happenings at the cooperative as well as updates during major outages.

Government Regulations

Gray reported that the board and management continue to monitor how new government regulations will affect members, and that EPA regulations continue to be the primary focus of

cooperative state-wide and national organizations' legislative efforts.

"Last year, I reported that the EPA had put in place regulations that essentially would prevent any new coal-fired generation

to be built, and as expected, in June of this year, President Obama announced a new federal mandate intended to reduce green house gas emissions from existing power plants," he said. "This mandate instructs regulators to apply the Clean Air Act to carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants, even though there is no technology viable to do this yet. This will certainly have an effect on rates in the coming years."

Gray said the issue may require a grassroots effort similar to the "Our Energy, Our Future" campaign several years ago when Congress attempted to implement cap and trade legislation for carbon dioxide.

Ballot Proposal

During the official business meeting, member Kathy Garver of Oak Grove



Members listen as Kathy Garver gives her opinion on the redistricting bylaw proposal.

Other Meeting Highlights

Other highlights of the meeting included guest speaker and 2013 Youth Tour Delegate Nora Faris, who presented the essay which won her the trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Informational booths where members could have their blood pressure checked, learn about gardening and insulation and how to make their homes the most energy-efficient they can be were set up throughout the evening. WCE linemen were on hand to give live demonstrations on electrical safety and how power outages are located and repaired.

Members could receive information on the WCE rebate program and Exede satellite internet services. Upon arrival, members were registered for prizes, including a free month of electricity (won by Kay Leibfreid of Holden), several energy certificates and prizes donated by vendors.



Kay Leibfreid of Holden shows off her grand prize energy certificate good for a free month of electricity in September.

nal wire that was strung more than 70 years ago.

"So, it is crucial that we continue to replace a certain amount of equipment on the system each year," Gray said. "This is vital to maintain reliability that you, as members, expect from us."

He also touched on the cooperative's right-of-way program, noting that trimming, mowing and spraying are being maintained on a three-year rotation on the system with 1/3 mowing, 1/3 spraying and 1/3 trimming.

Finances

On the financial side, Gray told members that 2012 was a challenge.

"With the mild weather, kWh sales were down 7 percent from the previous year," he said. "We ended the year with margins of \$850,000, most of which



Porter McConville, 7, and Daisy McConville, 5, get a different view of West Central Electric's annual meeting. They are the children of Dale and Ruthie McConville.

Education, training and information: It's a matter of principle

"Lighting the way for tomorrow's leaders, fueling the future of rural communities, powering progress through the principle of education, rural electric cooperatives are a source of infinite possibility," 2013 Youth Tour delegate



Faris

Nora Faris told WCE members during her address at the 74th annual meeting of members Aug. 2 in Warrensburg.

Faris, a senior at Concordia High

School, and the daughter of Paul and Betty Faris, delivered her winning Youth Tour speech, "Education, training and information: It's a matter of principle" to a packet house prior to the start of the business meeting.

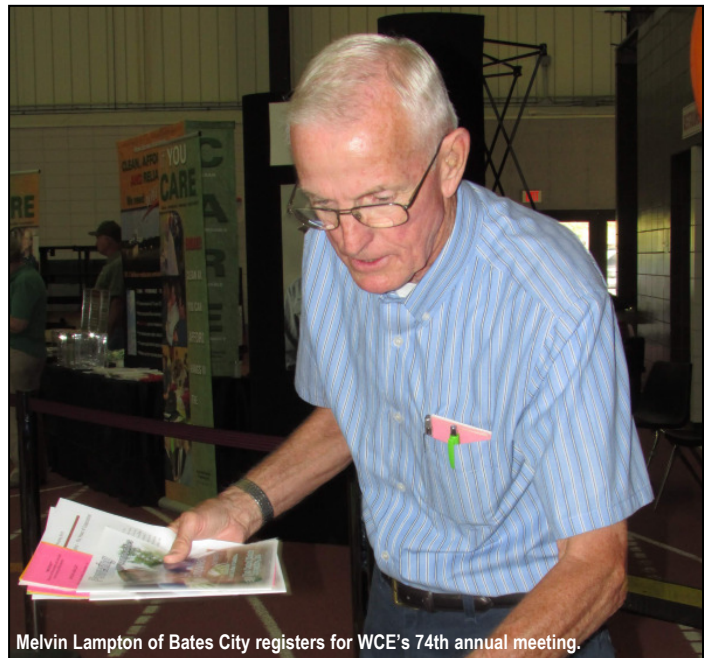
Faris described various ways West Central Electric goes beyond providing electricity to provide opportunities and educate members and the area communities about cooperatives and the world around them.

"Just ask the student who, after years of academic dedication, received a scholarship provided by West Central Electric," she said.

She described a farmer, who utilized the educational tools provided by his cooperative to make his operation safer and more energy-efficient.

"From the insulation lining the farmer's hog barns to the energy-efficient appliances installed in his neighbor's new home, such worthwhile investments for customers are the result of bright ideas shared by rural electric cooperatives."

"Rural electric cooperatives realize that a brighter tomorrow begins today -- by instructing students in leadership, providing risk-management instruction and technical training to employees, and delivering valuable information to individual members," she said. "From the cornfield to Capitol Hill, from the white farmhouse to the White House, rural electric cooperatives are educating decision-makers and community leaders present and future, as a matter of principle and a practice of progress."



Melvin Lampton of Bates City registers for WCE's 74th annual meeting.



Clark Bredehoeft presents long-time director and board vice president Ron Steelman with a plaque of appreciation for his 18 years of dedicated service.

2013 Annual Meeting Prize Winners

Grand Prize Free Month Electricity
Kay Leibfreid

HD television monitor
James & Teresa Begemann

\$50 Energy Certificate
Brian & Jennifer Wilcockson
Darrin & Patricia Tobias
Rick & Wanda Engelhardt
Robert Lynn
Donald Pettit

\$25 Energy Certificate
Dustin Hall
Leonard Clement
Robert McFarland
George Wyer & Loretta Martin
Richard & Diane Wilkins
Max Swisegood
Charles & Sandra Grandestaff
Bear Creek Baptist Church

Plants from JoCo Master Gardeners
Gary Brown
Ralph & Sharon Luvin

\$100 bill from Scobee Construction
Kenneth Nierman Farm, Inc.
Nicole Sartin
William & Rebecca Eckett
Ray & Beverly Espey
Steven Sartin

Bass Pro Shop Gift Certificate
Salvador & Mary Garcia

Caps from Comfort Solutions
Daniel & Bonnie Thessen
Robert & Elsie Portell
Harold Kirby

KIDS--Grand Prize Bike & Helmet
Mack Young
Daisie McConville

Stuffed Buddy Bear
Makenzie Lewis
Nathaniel Freund

Kids' DVD
Rachel Gwin
Danny Gibson

Steelman retires after 18 years

After nearly two decades of helping ensure West Central Electric Cooperative members received the most reliable service at the lowest rates possible, director and vice president Ron Steelman has retired.

"Being a cooperative director was a great opportunity to serve our members," said Steelman, who also said he was sorry to see his time on the board end. "As a board member, I never felt like I served just Lafayette County. I felt I should serve all members for the good of the cooperative. Had the changing of the districts last year not eliminated this position and forced me to retire, I would not have made that decision."

Steelman, who was elected to the board in 1995, has served in various capacities throughout the years, including many years on the WCE and John and Kathryn English Memorial scholarship committees. Steelman has been an advocate for cooperative youth programs that provide opportunities for area students to broaden their horizons and gain an education.

"One of the best programs WCE has is our scholarship program," Steelman said. "We hear lots of negative things

about our young people, but members should be proud of these young men and women who take the time to apply for these scholarships, as they are moving in the right direction and will make WCE's future brighter."

Seeing area students vie for a spot in Missouri's delegation on the Rural Electric Youth Tour was also a highlight for Steelman, who rarely missed a finals competition during which WCE's representatives were named.

"The Rural Electric Youth Tour is one of those life-changing experiences that only a lucky few are privileged enough to receive, and I am so pleased that West Central can be a part of providing that experience to students right here in our own backyard," he said.

Steelman said it has been a pleasure to serve on the board, and that he enjoyed his time immensely.

"This is definitely a worthwhile endeavor for any member to get involved in helping to run their cooperative," he said. "It was my privilege to meet and get to know so many members over the years."

Steelman and his wife, Debbie, live in Odessa.