



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central Electric Cooperative

December 2015

ElectricNews

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

Why do electric co-ops replace utility poles?



WCE lineman Robert Minnis works to replace a pole damaged by lightning following a copper theft attempt.

Replacing electric poles is a routine part of daily life for electric cooperative linemen. Sometimes a pole is old. Sometimes a pole may have been hit by a vehicle and damaged, or maybe a weather event has snapped a pole in half.

You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles found throughout our service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network? Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the tens of thousands of poles found on our lines.

To ensure our power poles are in good shape, WCE contracts with a company that travels the system for several months each year inspecting thousands of the 49,700 poles on the WCE system, checking for decay caused by exposure to the elements. We know which poles are oldest and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Pole inspections will start up again in

earnest in the spring. Watch the WCE newsletter as well as our Facebook page for information on where inspection crews will be working and when.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for other reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement. When a pole needs to be replaced, crews will start the process by digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be 15 percent of the new pole's height. Next, the new pole must be fitted with bolts, cross arms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces – all of the necessary parts for delivering safe and reliable electricity. Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole. The new pole is then raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.

So, the next time you come across a WCE crew replacing a pole, use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, our members.

Please join us for our annual Member Appreciation Day

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015
at our Higginsville and Oak Grove offices

Visit our offices and register to win:

***\$25 energy credit for your January 2016 electric bill**
(Four certificates will be given away at each office.)

Come on in to our offices and join us for coffee, punch and cookies to celebrate the season!

***Also register to win limited edition Willie Wiredhand collectible ornaments**

Headquarters:

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452
Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

District office:

506 N. Broadway
Oak Grove, MO 64075

PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

24-Hour Number:

1-800-491-3803

General Manager:

Mike Gray

*This institution is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.*

Board of Directors:

Densil Allen, Jr. President
Clark Bredehoeft, Vice-Pres.
Dale Jarman, Treasurer
Robert Simmons, Secretary
Stan Rhodes, Asst. Sect.
Max Swisegood, Director
Richard Strobel, Director
Sandra Streit, Director
Jeremy Ahmann, Director

Make it a safe and happy holiday season

The holidays are upon us. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. West Central Electric wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

INSPECT YOUR SEASONAL ITEMS

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires
- Rodent damage to wires
- Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

EXTENSION CORDS ARE TEMPORARY

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

NEVER DEFEAT SAFETY DEVICES

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

LOOK UP AND LIVE

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your lad-

der so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

BEWARE OF POWER LINES THROUGH TREES

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact WCE's Right-of-Way Department at 800-491-3803.

STAY AWAY FROM YOUR SERVICE CONNECTION

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights. If you must perform work close to your service entrance, contact WCE and we can send out a crew to temporarily wrap the wires in a protective shroud.

READ THE FINE PRINT

If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other electrified holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE KIDS AND PETS

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof. Every cabinet is locked and every outlet is covered. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using



your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.

Justin LaBerge writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.

NEW PACKAGES!

To fit your data needs we have added two new packages:

exede 12-30	30GB per month*	\$145.99
exede 12-50	50GB per month*	\$179.99

**based on a per month total download/upload*

Same great service, more choices...



- No lease fees
- Basic installation free
- No phone line required
- Local, on-site technicians
- 24/7 domestic tech support
- 24-month contract
- \$199 equipment

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Speeds up to
12M download
up to 3M upload

You choose what you use:

10GB per month*
15 GB per month*
25 GB per month*

**based on a per month total download/upload
buy more option available on all packages for \$9.99/1G

CONTACT US TODAY AT
800.342.0245 or
816-565-4942





From the Manager...

Thanks to our members for standing with us

For the past couple of years, we have followed developments relating to our ability to provide you, our members, with safe, reliable and affordable electricity -- specifically, the attempts of the EPA to over-regulate our coal-fired plants that provide Missouri with 80 percent of its electricity.

In those past two years, we urged our members to stand with us to send the EPA a message that we needed an all-of-the-above approach to providing electricity, and then to send letters to the EPA asking for an extension on the comment period so our members could be heard. By this time last year, more than 1 million contacts had been made to the EPA regarding regulations on new and existing power plants. WCE members provided more than 7,600 of those comments.

While we have fought together over the past two years, the recent unveiling of the administration's Clean Power Plan regulations for Missouri shows that we were largely ignored.

That said, we will enter the new year continuing to fight for our members and affordable rates. Missouri's Attorney General Chris Koster has joined 19 other states in suing the EPA over those regulations. With help from cooperative members, AMEC delivered petitions with 20,000 signatures asking him to

join the lawsuit. This time, we did not fall upon deaf ears.

We will continue to keep you informed regarding developments in the lawsuit and the Clean Power Plan as we continue to make sure we provide you with the safest, most reliable and most affordable electricity we can. Thank you for your efforts to help us in that mission.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

--Mike Gray



Missouri's Attorney General Chris Koster announced at the AMEC Annual Meeting that he would join 19 other states in suing the EPA over its Clean Power Plan regulations. Through your efforts, AMEC delivered petitions with 20,000 signatures asking him to file the lawsuit.

AG Koster courageous in joining EPA lawsuit

Missouri's Attorney General Chris Koster showed a great deal of courage when he announced on Oct. 9 that he would be joining 19 other states in a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency.

The announcement was made during a packed annual meeting of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. It came not long after employees of the association delivered more than 20,000 signatures on a petition asking Koster to join the lawsuit. Most of these signatures came from electric cooperative members who are concerned that EPA's latest round of new regulations will lead to crippling increases in their electric bills.

After announcing draft rules aimed at reducing emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants, EPA asked for comments from anyone who had a concern. Electric cooperative members nationwide — including more than 315,000 from Missouri — responded, all with a similar theme: "Don't raise our rates."

Those pleas fell on deaf ears. Not only did EPA officials ignore those who commented, they added salt to the wound by dramatically increasing the reduction target for Missouri's electric utilities in the final rules.

If EPA ignored your comments, Attorney General Koster did not. He carefully considered the issue, and called on the state's utilities for answers

to points he wanted clarified. Chief among these was the impact they felt the new rules would have on ratepayers.

Using EPA's own figures — which many in the industry believe are too low — utility representatives showed that the new regulations will increase the cost of providing electricity in Missouri by more than \$6 billion.

In his speech to the electric cooperative leaders, Koster called EPA's actions the latest in a series of "overreaches." He spoke of their controversial "Waters of the United States" policies, which he and other state AGs successfully sued to stop. This overreach, he said, would have placed even the land under his desk in Jefferson City under EPA regu-

lation.

There's no doubt that Koster must have received tremendous pressure from small but vocal groups of people who do not care what happens to electric bills in Missouri. Your electric cooperative appreciates his action on behalf of everyone who pays an electric bill in the state of Missouri.

Please join us in thanking him for standing up for us in this struggle to protect rates. You can contact him at: attorney.general@ago.mo.gov, or Missouri Attorney General's Office, Supreme Court Building 207 W. High St., P.O. Box 899, Jefferson City, MO 65102

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held September 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following Directors were present: Max Swisegood, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Densil Allen, Robert Simmons, Stan Rhodes, Clark Bredehoeft and Sandra Streit. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, Admin. Asst./Benefits Admin. Kim Lewis.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The unapproved minutes of the regular meeting of the board of directors held August 27, 2015, were approved.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES FOR AUGUST

An itemized list of expenditures for August was presented to the board, and the payment of the bills was ratified.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following August 2015 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report; the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report and the Safety Report, which included no lost time accidents during the month.

MEMBERSHIPS

The applications submitted for membership in the cooperative were accepted and approved. Directors reviewed a list of requests for termination of membership in the cooperative which, along with their requests that their billings be deducted from their deposits and the remainder, if any, be refunded to them, were accepted and approved.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported their attendance and shared highlights of the September board meeting including a Tabo Substation update and the retirement of AECl's Jim Jura.

RETIREE HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENT (HRA) PLAN

The HRA Plan was presented to the board and enacted following a review.

REGION 8-10 DELEGATE

Swisegood was appointed the voting delegate and Gray the alternate for the Region 8-10 meeting.

AMEC REPORT

Gray and Bredehoeft reported on their attendance and shared highlights of the recent meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF CFC VOTING DELEGATE FOR REGION 8-10 MEETING

Swisegood was appointed the voting delegate.

WAGE AND SALARY COMMITTEE

The recommendations of the Wage and Salary Committee were approved as presented.

REVISED SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS 8-14

A proposal to modify the cooperative's Rules and Regulations was approved as presented.

CBS PRESENTATION

The Scope of Service letter from Cooperative Building Solutions was presented to the board. Following discussion, it was approved to proceed with the first phase of the facility planning process.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray reported on an upcoming meeting with the Union and the new auditing firm and board meeting dates set for Oct. 29, Nov. 24 and Dec. 22.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The open director seat was discussed and directors agreed to fill the vacant seat.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MEETING ADJOURNED

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • August 2015

	This month	YTD 2015	YTD 2014
Revenue	2,110,666	17,487,683	18,137,940
Power Bill Expense	1,370,463	11,017,208	10,791,466
Operation & Maint. Expense	245,818	4,075,873	3,823,354
Depreciation Expense	161,278	1,270,234	1,216,911
Interest Expense	157,569	766,672	898,722
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,935,128	17,129,987	16,730,453
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(144,549)	357,696	1,407,486
Other Margins	5,236	107,644	86,129
TOTAL MARGINS	(139,313)	465,340	1,493,615

*IMPORTANT NOTICE * to members when making payments by phone

When making a payment using the automatic payment number, please double-check electric account numbers and bank account numbers to make sure they are correct. One missed number will result in payments being posted to the wrong electric account.

Payment drop box changes

Effective Dec. 1, there will no longer be a drop box at the F&C Bank in Holden. Members wishing to pay their bills may take them to the new drop box location in Holden at

Central Bank 206 S. Market St.

You may either use the drive-thru, drop box or walk in and deliver your payment. Members may also still utilize the Warrensburg location at 1310 S. Maguire St.

Net Metering & Interconnection Act

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source.

Our policy, agreement and application now reflect the new standards set by the Net Metering and Easy Connection Act as of January 1, 2008.

For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 916-565-4942.

West Central Electric Cooperative's Christmas & New Year's Holiday Closings:

Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015
Friday, Dec. 25, 2015
Friday, Jan. 1, 2016

Outage calls will be taken by
dispatchers at 1-800-491-3803.