



Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

Renewable energy tax credit available

Consumers may be eligible for a Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit on qualifying heating and cooling equipment. This 30-percent tax credit makes energy improvements such as geothermal heat pumps much more affordable.

For more detail about this credit and other incentives, check with your tax preparer to see if you might qualify for energy credits.

Save on efficient appliances in April during Missouri's tax holiday

Missouri's annual Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday begins April 19 and ends April 25. It's an opportunity to save on sales tax for qualifying Energy Star-certified appliances in participating counties and cities.

The following items qualify for the retail tax exemption as long as they are Energy-Star certified. The first \$1,500 of the purchase price of each item is exempt from tax.

- Clothes washers
- Water heaters
- Dishwashers
- Air conditioners
- Furnaces
- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Heat pumps

Go to <http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales/taxholiday/green/> to find out if your city, county or tax district will participate in the holiday. You'll find answers to other questions about the holiday there as well.

Board announces 2016 rate change

In an effort to bring rates in line with how the cooperative's expenses are incurred, West Central Electric's board of directors has announced a residential rate adjustment effective April 1, that will increase the service availability portion of the bill.

"Service availability reflects the fixed expenses that WCE has just to keep the system in place and maintained so we are able to deliver kilowatt hours, or energy, to our members," General Manager Mike Gray said.

There will be no increase in the kWh charges at this time.

The current service availability charge is \$25 per billing cycle. With

cent.

So what does this mean for the average member?

The average WCE member uses 1,500 kWh per 30 days. For a member using 1,500 kWh per 30 days, their electric bill would increase from \$150.92 to \$162.52, or an increase of 7.7 percent.

Gray said several contributing factors led to the need for an increase in rates including increases in labor, materials, transportation and wholesale power.

The last rate increase in April of 2012 was a 7 percent increase.

WCE Rate Schedule
(Monthly Electric Rates effective April 1, 2016)

Residential
Service Availability Charge @ \$1.22 per day
First 800 kWh @ \$0.0951
Excess kWh @ \$0.0712

Commercial and large-industrial rates available upon request

the increase, members will pay \$1.22 per day, which amounts to \$36.60 per 30 days. This adjustment will increase annual cooperative revenues by 8.5 per-

Plant a tree for energy savings

But take heed to power line safety zones

It'll take a while before trees you plant this spring produce shade, but they are worth the investment. Shade can reduce solar gain by as much as 9 degrees. And because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25 degrees cooler than air temperatures above a nearby blacktop. And in summer, a tree-shaded neighborhood will be about 6 degrees cooler than an unshaded development.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, strategically placed trees and shrubs can save up to 25 percent of home energy consumption year round and up to 50 percent on air conditioning costs. Even shading your room unit condenser with an awning, cover or shade from plants/trees can increase its efficiency as much as 10 percent.

Plant trees on the south and southwest corner of your house to provide welcome shade in a few years. In fact, a 6- to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species and the home, the tree will shade the roof within 10 years. Trees native to your area will have a better chance of surviving and thriving.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants also can shade the ground and pavement around your home. This reduces

Tree Planting Guide

Small Tree Zone:	Medium Tree Zone:	Large Tree Zone:
Trees less than 25' tall/spread at least 25' from lines.	Trees 25'-40' in height/spread at least 40' from lines.	Plant trees larger than 40' in height/spread at least 60' from lines.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Planting trees or putting up a fence this spring?

Call before you dig.



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

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

Landscape for beauty and energy savings

We tend to think of landscaping as a means of adding a beautiful outdoor setting for our homes. But according to the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Saver, a well-designed landscape saves enough energy to pay for itself in just eight years. More specifically, such a landscape can reduce an unshaded home's air conditioning costs by 15 to 50 percent! A well-designed landscape also can lower maintenance, reduce water use and lower noise and air pollution.

So let's get started. Spring is a perfect

time to start your landscaping, particularly when planting trees and shrubs. Here are some Energy Saver tips for the "cool microclimate" states of Missouri, Oklahoma and Iowa:

- Deciduous trees on the south can screen 70 to 90 percent of the summer sun from striking your house.
- A 6- to 8-foot deciduous tree near your home will start shading in its first year and can shade the roof in five to 10 years.
- Shrubs and groundcovers will cool the air around your house before that air

reaches the house.

- Allow winter sun to reach south-facing windows.
- Shade the south and west sides of your house with deciduous trees.
- Where wind is a problem, shield your house with windbreaks of trees and shrubs on the north side and northwest corner of your house. Plant the trees two to five times the mature height of the trees away from the house for maximum protection.
- Install a fence or wall in addition to

an evergreen windbreak to deflect winds over the house.

- To trap drifting snow, plant low shrubs on the windward side of a windbreak.
- Add vines, hedge or shrubs to shade hot pavement in the summer.

For more suggestions on planting for shade, go to <http://energy.gov/energysaver/landscaping-shade>, and for wind protection, go to <http://energy.gov/energysaver/landscape-windbreaks-and-efficiency>.

Turn you spring cleaning into energy savings

As you're cleaning and tidying up after winter, here are a few tips for saving energy this spring:

Open up your house – Install screens and open up your windows and doors to warming — or cooling — spring breezes. That's free "conditioned" air you don't have to pay for.

Take advantage of natural light – Before sunlight heats up your house, let that light pour inside. Instead of using incandescent light bulbs (90 percent of the electricity they use is heat not

light), use natural light to illuminate your house.

Wash your clothes cold, then air dry them – Up to 90 percent of the energy for washing clothes is for heating the water. Most clothes wash just fine in cold water. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates about 392 loads of laundry a year for a typical family. At 8 cents per kilowatt-hour, you could save about \$60 per year by switching to cold water. Of course, always wash a full load, not a partial.

Dry clothes by air – As for drying clothes, dry them in a dryer for just a couple of minutes to remove wrinkles. Then, hang them to dry outside or inside and save about 5 percent of your energy bill, according to DOE. You spend 30 to 40 cents to dry each load.

Change ceiling fans – Change the blade direction to counter-clockwise in warmer weather. When you stand underneath a fan set for summer, you should feel cooler. If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you

to raise the thermostat setting about 4 degrees with no reduction in comfort. Turn it off when you leave the room — fans cool people, not rooms.

Change filters – Be ready for summer by replacing last year's air conditioning filters now. Do the same for your furnace and be ready for next winter now.

Clean your refrigerator – Vacuum the coils on the back and adjust the temperature to 37 to 40 degrees for maximum efficiency. Also check the seals on the refrigerator door and replace if leaking.

Spring into energy efficiency

In early March, it may seem more like winter, but spring is about to hit. It's time to think about shutting down the furnace, taking down plastic sheeting over windows and getting an air conditioning checkup scheduled.

Here are some projects to take on this spring — if you didn't do them last fall — to improve the energy efficiency of your home:

STRIP AND TAPE, CALUK AND INSULATE — Sealing cracks and openings to prevent outside air from leaking into your home makes sense year around. Look for air leaks around doors and windows — that could save as much as 30 percent on your energy bill. Once you've fixed the air leaks, insulate; it will reduce the workload on your air conditioner. Here's insulation guidance from Energy Star:

Zone 4 (Eastern Oklahoma and most of Missouri) – uninsulated attic, R38-60; insulated attic, R38; walls, R5; floors, R25-R30

Zone 5 (Upper Missouri and southern Iowa) – uninsulated attic, R49-R60; insulated attic, R38-R49; walls, R5-R6; R25-R30

REPAIR SCREENS AND UPGRADE WINDOWS– Repair holes in screen windows and doors so you can enjoy those spring breezes. You might be surprised that you can buy affordable efficient windows. If you have single-pane windows to replace, you'll notice the difference the more efficient replacements make on your utility bill and general comfort. Energy Star-certified windows can lower utility bills by up to 15 percent. Look for windows that have low-e coatings, argon gas fill, wood frames and insulated spacers. Develop a plan for replacing windows over several years.

SHADE WINDOWS – If you have south- or west-facing windows that get a lot of direct sun hitting them, add an awning, drapes or protective film to shield those windows. Also, plant trees, vines or shrubs to naturally shade windows over time. Insulated drapes

are a good investment for summer and winter.

SUPGRADE YOUR A/C– Yes, this costs up-front money. But there may be incentives available and new, more efficient models may save as much as 50 percent on cooling bills over old systems. When shopping for a new unit, look for a seasonal energy-efficiency ratio (SEER) of 12.5 or more and buy the smallest capacity unit you'll need. If your air conditioner is more than 12 years old, it's time to check out new models.

UPGRADE YOUR LIGHTS – Traditional incandescent bulbs are no longer available, unless you've stockpiled a supply. You will use up to 80 percent less energy for compact fluorescents (CFL) or light-emitting diodes (LED) than for incandescent lights.

INSTALL SKYLIGHTS – The Iowa Energy Center suggests installing a skylight, such as a solar tube or tubular skylights, that allows more natural light into your

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Prepare yourself for spring thunderstorms

Lightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season. Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe:

Stay away from downed power lines. Electricity could still be flowing through them. Report any downed or sagging power lines or downed poles immediately to your local authorities or to West Central Electric Cooperative at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Hear thunder? Head inside. If you can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. Stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder—a recommendation from the National Weather Service. If you're outside and

can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall isolated trees, and metal objects like bleachers or fences.

Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges. Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.

Delay outdoor activities. If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside—it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

Assemble an emergency preparedness kit with

- Water—one gallon per person, per day;
- Non-perishable food;
- Flashlight;
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) and



- extra batteries;
- First-aid kit;
- Seven-day medicine supply;
- Copies of personal documents;

- Cell phone with chargers;
- Emergency contact information; and
- Cash.

Source: American Red Cross



Check your Boats and Docks.

Each year, people are killed by electrical shock while in the water near docks or boats plugged into shore power. Prevent a tragic electrical accident by taking the time to inspect all electrical systems on or near the water.

When it comes to your boat's electrical system, particularly those with alternating current (AC) systems, keep these tips in mind:

- There are some big differences between your house and your boat. Maintenance of the electrical system should be done by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.
- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection, comply with American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) standards, and should be serviced by an ABYC Certified® Technician.
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the appliance. If a fuse blows continuously, it should NOT be replaced with a larger one just to keep it from blowing again—something else is wrong. Get it checked out.
- Have your boat's electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added or removed from its system.

What you need to know about electrical safety and docks:

- Install a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breaker on the circuit(s) feeding electricity to the dock. A GFCI measures the current in a circuit. An imbalance of that current, such as a discharge into the water, will trip the GFCI and cut power.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal to the AC safety ground at the power source.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Ensure your neighbor's dockside system complies with the National Electrical Code (NEC) and has been inspected. Marinas should comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 303 and NEC Section 555.
- All electrical installations should be done by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes.
- Because docks are exposed to the elements, their electrical systems should be inspected at least once a year.

Learn more about electrical safety at



Brought to you by Safe Electricity in partnership with the American Boat & Yacht Council.

Reminder to our members...

West Central Electric would like to remind members that there is no mail service to our Oak Grove Office.

Any correspondence or payments must be mailed to WCE headquarters in Higginsville to the following address:

**West Central Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 452,
Higginsville, MO
64037**

(Walk-in and night-drop box services available at both locations.)

Don't forget there are several ways to pay your electric bill each month:

*You can call in a payment to 855-874-5349

*You can pay your bill online at www.westcentralelectric.coop

*You may pay your bill using the SmartHub app on your phone or mobile device.

You may sign up for auto-pay and have your payment automatically withdrawn from your account.

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held December 22, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Sandra Streit, Jeremy Ahmann and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and general counsel Shawn Battagler.

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 Nov. 24, 2015, were approved.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES FOR NOVEMBER

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

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 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 and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray reported 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 at the NW board meeting and reported highlights including a CFC update, AECl CEO search, coal supplies, policy changes and AECl margins.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported on his attendance and reported highlights including discussion regarding broadband, MECIP report, Federated report, Youth Tour and legislative activity.

AMECPAC

The board approved a \$500 donation to AMECPAC.

NRECA, CFC, NRTC AND FEDERATED VOTING DELEGATE

Jeremy Ahmann was appointed as a voting delegate and Robert Simmons as the alternate.

SERVICE RULES

The board reviewed Service Rules and Regulations, Sections 15-23 and voted to approve as amended.

ANNUAL MEETING VOTING METHODS

The board approved a proposal for voting by mail.

UNION CONTRACT

The board approved the Union's contract proposal as presented.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. He reported on the following: statistical comparison to neighboring utilities, rate structure options, retreat agenda, employee appreciation and fundraiser for local food bank and pension restoration fund to NRECA.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Directors adjourned into executive session.

MEETING ADJOURNED

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • November 2015

	This month	YTD 2015	YTD 2014
Revenue	1,893,243	23,088,374	23,937,709
Power Bill Expense	1,296,563	14,824,712	144,749
Operation & Maint. Expense	362,152	2,659,504	16,635,852
Depreciation Expense	162,274	1,756,030	1,680,687
Interest Expense	(23,774)	1,062,310	1,231,345
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,797,215	20,302,556	19,692,633
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(42,772)	(23,237)	1,326,103
Other Margins	13,629	153,278	117,485
TOTAL MARGINS	(29,143)	130,041	1,443,588

Plant a tree for energy savings, but take heed to power line safety zones

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heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your house. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area. Plant vines to shade walls. Plant shrubs near the foundation to shade walls and windows.

However, avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately next to

Spring into energy efficiency, save with these useful tips

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home. The tubes use optics to reflect light indirectly through the tube inside, replacing light that otherwise would require electricity.

BUY A CEILING FAN – A fan will allow you to raise the thermostat by about 4 degrees without feeling the difference. And you'll use about 4 percent less energy for every degree change.

SEAL THE GARAGE – Your attached garage may leak more conditioned air than any other part of your home. Add weatherstrips to the bottom of the garage door and the door into your house.

Net Metering & Interconnection Act

Missouri's net metering act requires retail electric suppliers to make net metering available to customers who have their own electric generation units that meet certain criteria, one of which is that the unit is powered by renewable energy resources.

Net metering is where the customer gets credit for the electricity he/she generates in lieu of electricity supplied by the electric utility. Net metering provides the best of both worlds for consumers who choose to invest in renewable energy technology: they have the security of grid connection, but are also compensated for the excess power they produce that's fed into the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net-metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source. Our policy, agreement and application reflect the standards set by the Net-Metering and Easy Connect Act (ECA).

Net metering is available to customers on a first-come, first-served basis until the total rated generating capacity of the net-metering systems equals 5 percent of the utility's single-hour peak load during the previous year.

Simple interconnection procedures that standardize interconnection for all Missourians are necessary to promote the use of renewable energy in Missouri. The ECA makes it easier and more cost-effective for Missourians to connect small renewable energy systems to the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative supports sound renewable energy. We just ask that our members do their homework before spending thousands of dollars to add solar, wind or any type of renewable energy source to their home.

For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.