West Central Electric Cooperative

November 2016

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

ElectricNews

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

This November, let your voice be heard

Visit www.vote.coop and take the pledge to learn more about issues that impact us locally

Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline – with the occasional uptick here and there. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout!

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

Here at West Central Electric Cooperative, we want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase. We want to give you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government, not just the presidential race. And we want you to know more about the issues that could impact our local communities.

CO-OPS VOTE
A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
WWW.VOTE.COOP

America's electric cooperatives are doing their part by informing co-op staff and members through Coops Vote, a non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting **www.vote.coop**, you can learn about your candidates, access voter registration information and more.

The future of rural economies depends on their ability to keep up with today's global economy, which is why access to broadband internet is a key topic of discussion this election season. Just 55 percent of rural Americans have broadband at home. Quick access to information is crucial in finding a job, getting a better education and even gathering the information needed to make major health decisions. But there is a barrier: expensive costs.

With the right state and federal policies, broadband technology can become available to all rural Americans, allowing families and businesses to communicate in new and faster ways.

Electric cooperatives are already committed to providing affordable electricity to our communities, so helping provide affordable broadband access is a natural next step.

We encourage you to visit **www.vote.coop** and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us locally. Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

Meghaan Evans 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.

Busting the myths about 'smart meters'

By now, most Americans have likely heard of the "smart grid." This phrase is being used to describe the computerization of America's electrical infrastructure. The purpose of this computerization is to improve the reliability, efficiency, resiliency and security of the electric grid.

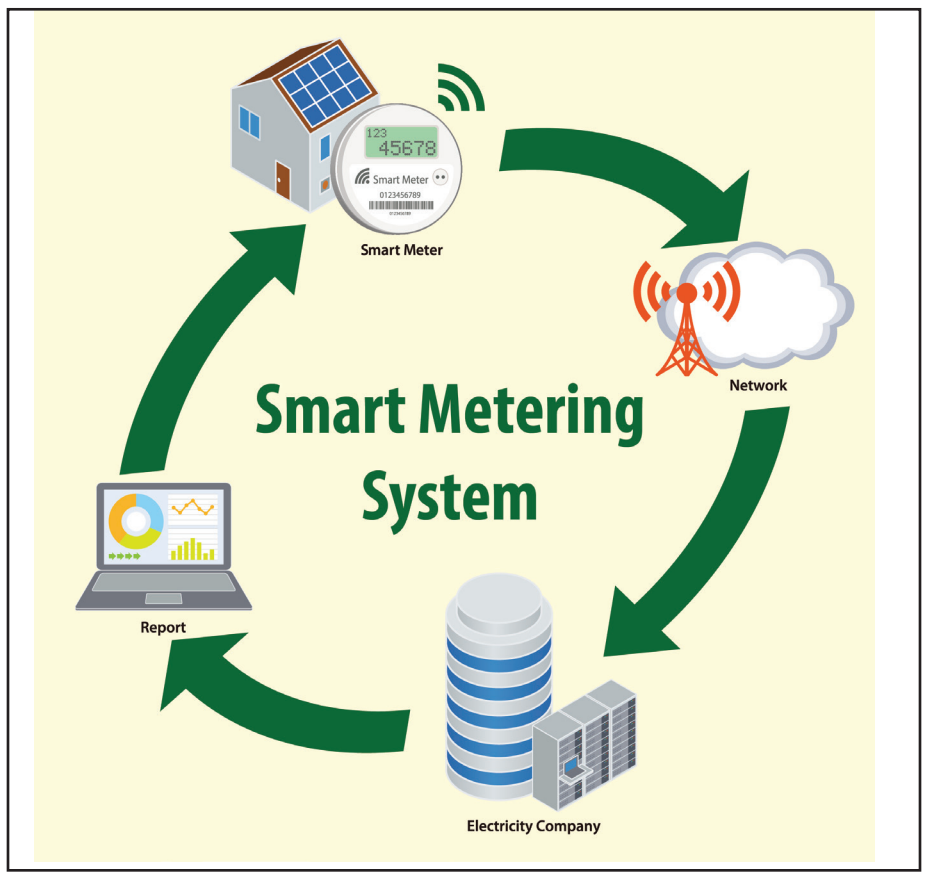
A key component of the smart grid is an advanced metering infrastructure, also known as AMI in the utility world. AMI systems utilize digital meters as well as computer technology to measure electric use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters. The digital meters communicate via radio or the existing power lines and have been loosely termed as "smart meters." AMI benefits electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed over the years concerning smart meters. These myths can be classified into three categories: privacy concerns, security and health effects. Let's take a look at each, starting with privacy.

West Central Electric takes great pains to keep your information private – and that information includes the details of your electric use. The only people who see that data are co-op employees and you. Your co-op will not release this information to anyone else without your specific permission. The myths are that the data collected can tell when you are home or away and exactly what you are doing when you are there and that this data is being given to the government. Naturally, the data will show when you are home because for most families, energy consumption is higher then. But having said that, the current smart meter cannot identify what activities are taking place down to the specific appliance in use. This myth is simply unfounded.

What about the myth that these meters actually make the electric grid less secure by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems through the smart meter and wreak havoc? While hackers continually attempt to break into electric systems, their focus is at higher levels in the operation. Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons. Hackers like to work remotely

Continued on page 4



AMI meters, also known as smart meters, benefit electric co-op members in variety of ways: greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration and more. Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed concerning smart meters and their impact on privacy, health and security.

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.

Can you help us locate these people?

The following members have capital credit refund checks due them. Checks mailed to the last address on file for these members have been returned. If you can provide a current address for any of the members listed below, or the name of an heir if the member is deceased, please contact Sandy Starke at 1-800-491-3803 or 1-816-565-4942.

Abrams, Shelly	46.56
Adams, Rebecca L	19.76
Allen, Tim R & Loretta L	134.00
Allison, Joseph N & Karolyn J	80.14
Aultman, Gloria & Melody	5.67
Bailey, Vicky L	114.19
Baldwin, Traci	10.26
Beddow, Kathy	16.99
Bell, Larry	6.15
Berry, Norman F & Linda A	25.26
Boland, Linus J & Sally	140.40
Bollmeyer, Ruby	28.52
Bowman, David Ricky Sr	13.35
Bowman, Shelly	13.35
Boyle, Paul R & Mary A	96.08
Bradley, David P & Rhonda	112.90
Branstetter, Ruby	5.30
Brantley, Aaron	7.58
Briscoe, Shawn W & Kera	14.42
Brooks, Jesse & Becky	24.54
Bultmann, Randy G & Mary	21.71
Campbell, Charles M Jr	17.77
Campbell, Jessica J	13.60
Canon, Jon Von	11.84
Cappuzzo, John D	92.39
Carter, David T	176.99
Carter, Sheila	164.48
Cary, R M	143.10
Caswell, Stacy Lee	52.18
SUS Catholic Charities	10.63
Clark, Irva	77.64
Comstock, Nancy	8.31
Copper, Judith M	7.94
Craney, Jeffrey A & Diana L	24.22
R & D Construction	78.45
Davis, Kip L	269.36
Day, Grant L	29.55
Denton, Stephen & Sheila	10.51
Donovan, James M & Brenda	161.37
Douglas, Rick	20.92
Le Duc, Christopher & Stephanie	7.94
Dyer, C Steven	31.81
Eckhoff, Beth	95.26
Evans, E V	5.16
Gasperino Farms	7.76
Faulkner, James A	68.61
Fisher, Altha	148.20
Fletcher, Don & Michel Feagans	5.62
Fosberg, William D & Christine	39.44
Frank, Clara E	51.76
Frizzell, Robert C & Leann	22.33
Frost, Eugene A	14.03
Fulton, Sue Anne	79.39
Golden, Mark W & Teri Stierly	101.72
Goth, C L & Becky	239.35
Graf, David S	186.66
Gregg, Melva L	52.88
Grimm, David	23.16
Grogan, Roger L	10.01
Guffey, Chad	10.87
Haller, Laura	301.42
Hankins, R M & Barbara Kay	44.08
Harrington, Johanna L	12.20
Hartwig, Johnny & Shelly	41.63
Hauf, Aviva	145.53
Haworth, Valerie	80.78
Hennessy, Michael & Diana	101.82
Herring, Cathy	44.43
Herring, Steve	44.43
Hickson, Rhonda S	32.88
Hinrichs, Maude A	124.90
Hojnacki, Ronald & Grace	9.41
Homan, Lloyd Dean & Beverly A	10.73
Horizon Construction,%C Keckler	14.36
Hough, Delbert G	36.24
Houts, Vernon R II & Karen	8.25
Howe, Kevin & Tammy	30.60
Huckabee, Steven P & Valerie	5.13
Hulse, Raymona	14.92
Hutcheson, Ward & Twyla Reese	11.99
Hyde, Tina M	27.73
Jansen, Bradley J & Patricia A	85.67
Johnson, Lee E & Becky	6.20
Johnson, Nick J	13.24
Joiner, Peggy L	16.03
Roberts, Leonard S Jr Estate	20.74
Eiken, Paul Jr	8.09
Wahwassuck, Raphael Jr & Trac	36.77
Julian, Michael	142.44
Kellogg, Darren	7.50
Kendrick, Kris	9.98
Kendrick, Shirley S	15.60
Kennedy, Leroy D	6.04
Kerivan, Mark T	32.20
Kilani, David	19.46
Kingston, Donna	13.78
Klonowski, Joel	5.20
Lamphier, Brian	73.53
Lankford, Richard	10.51
Lasater, Andy	39.01
Law, Chester L	17.83
Leatherman, Charles C	60.91
Lerch, Matthew A & Nicole	21.82
Limback, L James Jr	175.46
Lindsay, Larry	30.87
Long, James D & Gretchen	36.24
Louvier, Terry	18.39
Lovell, Carl W & Carol A	6.61
Lucas, Stan & Gwen	42.22
Lynn, Judy C	11.41
Ambrose, Kevin & Sindy Maddy	31.78
Elite Mfg Housing Inc	5.93
Mallory, Paula	24.75
Marr, Terri A	118.54
Martinez, James	25.49
Martinez, Marta I	58.04
Mathis, Linda S	48.39
McCarrick, Robert	91.38
McClaskey, Loretta	84.81
Mccoy, Heather	6.26
Mccullough, Nancy G	26.40
Mcginnes, Sheri	10.54
Mckenzie, Robert W	74.47
Miller, Danny A & Christie	110.07
Miller, Marty L	6.67
Miller, Roy B & Loretta	178.13
Mitchell, Isaac L Jr & Tonya	145.42
Mooney, Charles K	6.03
Moore, Cynthia	18.77
Moore, Derin D & Tina	5.96
Morgan, James	5.23
Morlan, Kenneth	7.68
Morris, Stewart R & Carl	85.12
Mullhatten, John L	11.62
Mullis, John D	13.73
Neblett, Angela L	23.47
Nelson, Kimberly A	8.04
Norris, Marty & Julie	104.29
Novak, Ronald Ray	103.88
Nupp, Dakota	60.09
Osborne, James E & Wendy L	12.51
Owsley, Matthew	42.47
Pace, Denise L	54.91
Peebles, Larry L	90.81
Pennington, Donald B & Debrah	8.49
Perdue, Terry W	16.50
Perry, Jason & Tonya	41.07
Peterson, Lin J	39.55
Pierce, Sue	17.65
Powell, Barry	37.76
Pratt, Yvonne I	0.41
Pruss, Jeffrey A & Danuse	17.93
Quirk, John	68.55
Rauch, Robert L & Judith	53.01
Ray, Bonnie J	6.98
Ray, Marilyn A	102.47
Ray, Rick	3.49
Reddell, Ginger	165.95
Register, Charlie E & Eckhoff	74.15
Richey, Allen & Amanda	19.66
Robertson, Charles E	23.16
Rogers, Donald J & Donna R	5.51
Rogers, Randal M & Amy L	7.89
Rohrer, Leslie & Faith	12.37
Rosebrock, Daniel	15.31
Ross, Dan	6.28
Ross, Julie D	71.01
Rueff, Michael E & Sharon K	103.34
Rymarkiwiecz, Mark & Candy	16.93
Scharnhorst, Melody L	135.01
Schatz, William C & Donna D	1.92
Schwartz, Paul H	8.57
Shaw, Scott	19.45
Sheller, Kenneth D & Sandra L	5.47
Shields, Sandy	11.61
Shipman, Harriet	171.19
Shore, Dennis	78.49
Shuck, Darrell W & Melody E	21.15
Simpson, Morris J	101.13
Sinks, Darrell K	402.10
Sinks, Lila F	47.84
Slater, Leslie B & Tamra	167.14
Slone, Donald & Alexis	138.32
Slone, Linda	64.61
Smith, Rebecca	6.37
Smith, Stephen E	16.84
Smith, Steve & Karen	177.27
Soerries, Patty S	147.89
Steagall, Catherine J	155.13
Steele, Joseph Michael	47.95
Steidley, Steve & Robin	14.53
Steinacher, Leslie	18.86
Stewart, Michael J & Sheree	20.36
Stober, Jessica Erin	9.68
Sullivan, Michael S	6.92
Surface, Joel & Joann	68.42
Talley, Robert	73.61
Tanner, Violet L	53.53
Tapu, Haveloki & Dana	121.00
Taylor, Chris & Adriann	21.93
Teuscher, Kathie A	66.39
Thierfelder, Melissa A	24.83
Thomas, Lucas & Nedette	19.58
Thorley, Barbara	478.49
Tilden, Gladys	37.28
Tillery, Cynthia	21.38
Towne, Dennis & Melissa	30.01
Tullock, Scott A & Toni	7.17
Turner, Marshall C	9.97
Vanderlinde, Leen & Cornelia	19.34
Vaughan, Tim	60.22
Wagner, Charlotte	115.79
Wall, Ronald W	135.20
West, Robin	35.31
Wheeler, George W Sr & Mary A	163.23
Whisenhunt, Michael D & Melissa	47.01
White, Christopher D & Ova Ann	14.54
White, Tony W	133.86
Wickham, Carlene	24.70
Wilkinson, Deric	83.84
Williams, Karen	15.88
Williams, Leslie D & Mary A	11.08
Williams, Stephen W & Jennifer	14.65
Wilson, Scott & Debbie	144.27
Woods, Jeff	15.17
Wright, R Nikole	11.39
Wyzard, Lisa L	16.14
Young, Mike & Peggy	33.11
Zamarron, Michael S	14.14
Zullig, Kim	9.36

WCE offices will be closedFriday, Nov. 11 for Veterans Day and Thursday & Friday, Nov. 24-25 for Thanksgiving.

Johnson

Johnson is new apprentice lineman at WCE

West Central Electric General Manager Mike Gray has announced the hiring of Nathan Johnson of Odessa as an apprentice lineman working out of the headquarters office in Higginsville.

Johnson's experience with WCE began as a senior in high school when he was chosen as the winner of the West Central Electric Cooperative/ State Technical College Electrical Distributions Systems Scholarship. After completing the two-year EDS program at STC, and spending one summer as an intern, Johnson says he is happy to be officially a full-time employee of the cooperative.

"I am looking forward to the experience of becoming a journeyman lineman and working with a good group of guys," he said.

Any kind of digging can be dangerous if you don't know where the power lines are.

811®

Know what's below. Call before you dig.

If any of your fall projects require digging like planting trees or shrubs, or setting posts, remember to dial 811 first.

Overhead vs. Underground:

What's the difference between power lines?

Pros and cons, and why co-ops choose one over the other

There are two methods of installing the power lines that carry electricity to your home, overhead and underground. West Central Electric Cooperative members sometimes ask why we use one versus the other, or more to the point, why all power lines are not installed using the underground construction method. Isn't one method better than the other? These are great questions, and the answer is that each method has its place.

Overhead line construction starts with the setting of utility poles. Poles can be set in nearly any type of terrain, even rocky. In the case of heavy rock, special equipment is used to augur out the hole. If placement occurs in boggy or wet terrain, many techniques are available to set poles securely. Once the poles are in place, wires can be strung and then equipment—like transformers, fuses and reclosers¬—are installed. Power can now flow.

Underground line construction requires digging a trench that is deep enough to keep the lines well away from surface activities. Where the terrain is extremely rocky, underground lines may not be an option. Next, wires are laid in the trench directly or placed in conduits for protection. The trench is filled in, and the surface is restored to its original condition. Padmount transformers and additional equipment are installed as needed, now the system is ready to deliver electricity.

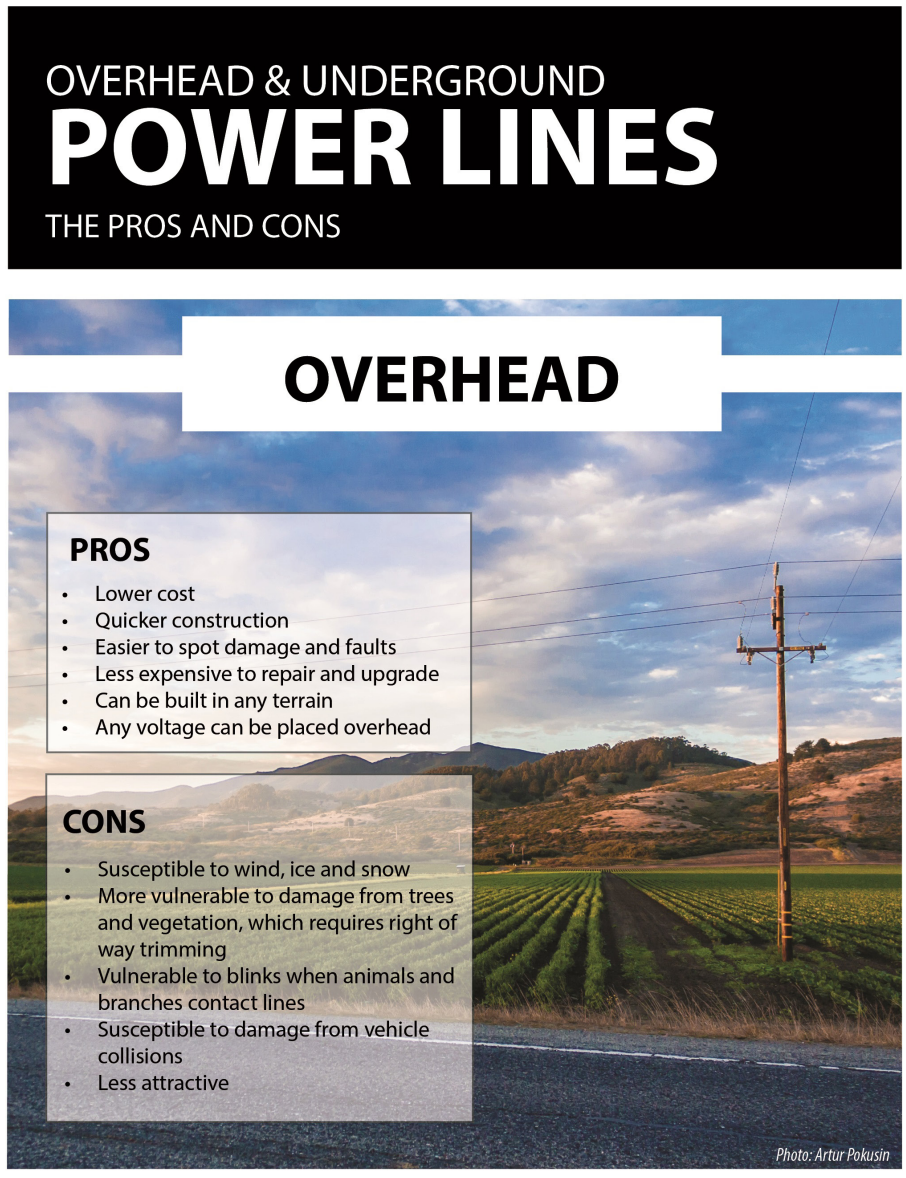
Let's take a look at some the advantages and disadvantages of each construction method, beginning with overhead.

Determining if power lines should be overhead or underground boils down to what is best for the situation. Underground lines might be ideal in situations where there is a desire to keep the poles and wires out of sight, such as a residential neighborhood, park or historical area. There are many cities and towns that construct only underground lines for a variety of reasons.

Overhead systems work well when appearance is not a major concern. Examples include extremely long line distances across country, where the voltages are higher than the limitations set for underground lines.

The ultimate mix of underground and overhead construction used by WCE provides you, our members, with the highest possible quality of service at the lowest possible price. Cost, appearance, reliability, maintenance and future upgrades will drive which is the better approach, overhead or underground.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues 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.



From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held August 25, 2016

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, Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Jeremy Ahmann and Sandra Streit. Absent was Dale Jarman. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray , General Counsel Shawn Battagler and Kevin Kelso, CPA.

AUDIT REPORT

Kevin Kelso, CPA, presented the audit report of the 2015 financials, which was approved by the board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the Agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting held July 28, 2016; minutes of the reorganizational meeting held Aug. 5, 2016; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following July 2016 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with monthly 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 142 days without a lost-time accident.

AMEC REPORT

Gray reported his attendance at the AMEC meeting and highlights including driving simulators, solar discussions, a lawsuit to block a campaign finance ballot measure, Training and Development Committee activities and employee pay raises.

NW ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Swisegood and Gray reported attending the NW meeting and shared highlights including substation fuse replacements, equipment purchases, storm outages, wind production, Missouri City plant closing, employee pay raises and an AECI update regarding operations and sales.

ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

The board discussed the annual meeting including the mail-in balloting and ideas for future improvement.

REVIEW STANDING COMMITTEES

President Allen established the following committees:

Scholarship Committee: Simmons, Allen, Rhodes and Jarman

Wage & Salary Committee: Allen, Ahmann, Bredehoeft and Strobel

Bylaw & Policy: Swisegood, Jarman, Simmons and Ahmann

Strategic Planning: Streit, Jarman and Rhodes

MANAGERS REPORT

Gray presented the monthly Manager's Report which included an update on retirement plan rates, insurance rates, building renovation updates and upcoming events.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Directors duscussed the issue of fiber optic cable to the cooperative headquarters.

NEW BUSINESS

Directors discussed attendance at the Governor's Ham Breakfast.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session and reconvened following.

ADJOURNMENT

Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • *Statement of Operations* • July 2016

	This month	YTD 2016	YTD 2015
Revenue	**2,438,368**	**15,352,718**	**15,377,017**
Power Bill Expense	1,504,853	9,693,259	9,646,745
Opertion & Maint. Expense	209,909	1,487,780	1,802,623
Depreciation Expense	167,453	1,158,346	1,108,957
Interest Expense	105,693	709,622	609,103
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	**1,987,908**	**13,049,007**	**13,167,428**
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	176,892	435,020	502,245
Other Margins	28,288	110,857	102,409
TOTAL MARGINS	**205,180**	**545,877**	**604,654**

Busting the myths about 'smart meters'

From page 1

via the Internet, and smart meters don't offer that option. Radio-based smart meters

require the hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal, break the proprietary communication protocol and to be there for extended periods of time to collect the short burst of data sent. Therefore, smart meters are an unlikely and unprofitable target for hackers.

Finally there are the myths surrounding smart meters and ill effects on health. These concerns state that having the radio-based smart meter is the equivalent to having a cell tower attached to the side of your home. Again, this is unfounded. Let's look at why. Number one is that they communicate intermittently for as few as five minutes a day. These devices are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, and their output is well below the levels this Federal agency sets. As one doctor observed, the radio waves emitted are more like those of a cordless phone or wireless router. Radio waves emitted by smart meters are much weaker and less frequent than other sources we use on a daily basis.

We will all benefit from the continued development of America's smart grid and can rest easy with the knowledge that the rumors surrounding radio-based smart meters don't hold water.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues 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.

As the temperature goes down, outages and blinks caused by animals will increase

The air is calm and crisp and the day is clear, when suddenly your power goes off. You wonder what could have caused such a thing. There's not a cloud in the sky.

The bad news is, there doesn't have to be a cloud in the sky or a storm in the air to cause a power outage. Although a number of outages may be caused by high winds blowing tree limbs onto lines, the culprit in the fall of the year is likely to be of the furry or feathery variety.

"When the air begins to turn cold, a lot of times we see an increase in the amount of outages on our system that we can attribute to animals," Line Superintendent Randy Burkeybile said.

The number of outages attributed to animals can increase in the fall when squirrels begin preparing for winter. Squirrels and other animals climb on equipment, such as transformers and fuses, and the equipment shuts down in order to protect the rest of the system.

"The reason these instances sometimes tend to increase in the fall is because the transformers put off heat," Burkeybile said. "Squirrels, raccoons and other animals will climb onto the transformers for warmth, and they get into places they shouldn't be. Before you know it, there is a power outage."

Animals on the transformers can also cause the monotonous "blinks" that keep the lights off only long enough to force you to have to set every digital clock in the house.

Your cooperative is doing what it can to reduce outages attributed to animals by installing insulated "bird wire" and wildlife protection devices to prevent animals and birds from making contact with electrical equipment. These devices are not only meant to protect the electrical system, but also the birds and animals.

Your cooperative is working hard to reduce the number of outages experienced by our members. **When calling in an electrical outage, please be sure to have your map number available. It can be found under the "service information" section located in the center of your billing statement.** Outages may be reported at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942, or on our website at www.westcentralelectric.coop.