



# ElectricNews

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## Allen says connecting with members is as important as connecting the meter

“Since prehistoric times, changes in communication have been abundant,” WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. told members gathered at the 78th annual meeting in Warrensburg Aug. 4. “We have gone from drawing pictures on cave walls to posting them on Facebook and Instagram. So, what does all this have to do with



Densil Allen, Jr.

your electric cooperative? Well, I'll tell you. It is all about not only connecting the meter, but also connecting with our members.”

Allen went on to say that although the main role of the cooperative is to provide members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity -- in essence keeping the meter connected -- connecting with members on a more personal level is something the cooperative and its leaders strive for.

“We could just have a regular, boring business meeting where members come in, vote, hear a few stuffy speeches and go home, but we would rather spend a little casual time with you,” he said. “Annual meeting is the perfect place to catch up with what is happening in our members' lives, see your newest grandchild, and talk about the latest storm and our crazy Missouri weather.”

Allen said he loves to see a great turnout at annual meeting so employees and board members can put a face to the voices they hear over the phone, and so members can do the same. He mentioned Member

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**Smarthub can help...** West Central Computer Tech Dru Felkins explains the benefits of the Smarthub app to members Jerry and Robin McClain. With Smarthub, members can pay their bills, check account balances, make payment arrangements, check their usage and report service issues.

## Large crowd on hand for annual meeting

With no director races and only a housekeeping bylaw amendment on the ballot, this year's annual meeting was smooth, efficient and quick, with the business meeting and prize drawings over with by 8 p.m.

A total of 730 members registered, with a total attendance of more than 1,300.

### Director and Bylaw Election

All three directors with terms expiring ran unopposed for re-election, and were elected by acclamation. District 3 directors Robert Simmons and Richard Strobel, and At-Large District 5 Director Densil Allen Jr. will all serve three-year terms.

Members also considered a housekeeping bylaw amendment which allows the board to use the capital credit accounts of members who have disconnected from the service lines of the cooperative to pay any unpaid accounts. The amendment passed by a vote of 513-yes to 76-no.

### Other Meeting Highlights

Other highlights of the meeting included a presentation of WCE's winning Youth Tour essay by Hanna Stillwell of Warrensburg High School. Stillwell attended the 2017 Rural Electric Youth Tour as a representative of WCE, and delivered her winning

essay titled, “Change the World, Change a Life.”

Stillwell spoke about the cooperative's efforts to not only provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity, but also to do its part to take care of the environment and help people in the process.

She talked about the cooperative providing energy-efficiency programs, educating people on electrical safety and making a positive impact on their local communities.

“Affordable and efficient energy sources will always be in high demand. Now and in the future, it is crucial to focus on progress and helping those in need to make positive changes for the world,” she said. “WCE has taken on this challenge by helping local members, voicing concerns and needs at state and national meetings with Congress, and helping the less fortunate at the international level. Electric cooperatives

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Youth Tour delegate Hanna Stillwell presents her winning speech at the annual meeting.

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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

## Connecting with members is as important as connecting the meter

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Appreciation Day in December where members are invited to stop by, have refreshments and visit awhile with cooperative employees.

Allen also talked about the cooperative using Facebook to not only keep members informed about impending weather events, safety information and important reminders such as dock safety during lake season, but also to be able to congratulate local sports teams on a successful season or recognize local winners of cooperative contests.

Helping our youth to connect with their country by providing opportunities to learn how cooperatives and our government work by sponsoring delegates on the Rural Electric Youth Tour and the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience is also important

to the cooperative, Allen said.  
“As I look at the changes our world

has gone through in the past few years, I can’t help but be a little nostalgic about the days when most communica-

“Although cell phones and Facebook can cut into time at the family dinner table, some of this technology is helping us to connect with our members on a more personal level, and we like that. But we also like the good old-fashioned handshake and conversation over a meal at annual meeting or a cookie at Christmas.”

—Densil Allen Jr., WCE Board President

tion took place on an old front porch between neighbors passing time on a string,” he said. “Don’t get me wrong, technology is great. Having minutes or even hours of warning before severe weather hits, or being able to get in contact with your teenager immediately when they are late has immense value and comfort.

“Although cell phones and Facebook can cut into time at the family dinner table, some of this technology is helping us to connect with our members on a more personal level, and we like that,” he said. “But we also like the good old-fashioned handshake and conversation over a meal at annual meeting or a cookie at Christmas.”

Allen told members that while we celebrate advances in communication, we should also celebrate cooperatives and members connecting in ways that go far beyond the electric meter.

has gone through in the past few years, I can’t help but be a little nostalgic about the days when most communica-

warm, summer evening, or when the kids picked up a phone to talk, it was each end of a couple of tin cans with



Vladstone Martin was the winner of the boys’ grand prize bike and helmet.



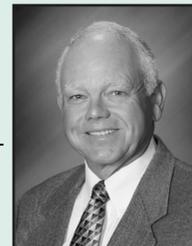
Girls’ grand prize winner Olivia Strobel gets a little help picking up her prize from Dad, David, and little brother, Ethan.

## Incumbents re-elected, Allen will stay on as board president

Three incumbents were elected to serve for an additional three years during the business meeting at the 77th WCE Annual Meeting Aug. 4 in Warrensburg.

In District 5, the At-Large district, Densil Allen Jr., and in District 3 Robert Simmons and Richard Strobel, all ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation. During their re-organizational meeting, all officers retained their positions as voted on by the board. Densil Allen, Jr. of

Warrensburg will remain as president; Clark Bredehoeft of Blackburn, will remain as vice president; Dale Jarman of Holden will remain as treasurer Robert Simmons of Warrensburg will remain as secretary and Stan Rhodes of Corder will remain as assistant secretary.



Allen



Directors re-elected for a three-year term include (l-r) Densil Allen Jr., District 5; Robert Simmons, District 3 and Richard Strobel, District 3.

# Gray reports a good year and a strong cooperative

In his annual report to the members, General Manager Mike Gray reported that the cooperative is in good shape both physically and financially, and his announcement that no rate increase is expected for next year drew applause from the crowd gathered for the 78th annual meeting.

Gray reported to members that growth remains steady, and work on maintenance and system improvements continues.

“Current projects include a three-phase tie line just north of Chilhowee along F Highway,” he said. “This tie will give us better reliability for members on the Rose Hill and Magnolia substations.”

He also reported on a project to rebuild a three-phase line from the Odessa Substation to the headquarters office in Higginsville which will include a fiber optic cable allowing access to power supplier NW Electric’s communication system.

“This will give us a fiber connection to many of our substations. With this, we will have more reliable communication to read meters, monitor equipment and detect outages more quickly,” Gray said.

He also notified members of updates on EPA regulations.

“The outlook for the future in the short term looks as though EPA will be abandoning the previous administration’s Clean Power Plan and looking at easing regulations that were aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions. This should help keep wholesale power costs from rising at an accelerated rate.”

—Mike Gray, General Manager

“The outlook for the future in the short term looks as though EPA will be abandoning the previous administration’s Clean Power Plan and looking at easing regulations that were aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions,” he said. “This should help keep wholesale power costs from rising at an accelerated rate.”

He told members that cooperative state and national organizations continue to lobby elected officials to keep electric rates affordable while continuing to be good stewards of the environment.

“Associated Electric, our wholesale power supplier, continues to use a diverse mix of generating resources: coal, natural gas, wind and hydro. In 2016, the mix was 63 percent coal, 16 percent natural gas, 14 percent wind and 7 percent

hydro,” he said.

Gray also discussed right-of-way maintenance, damage from the recent tornado in Oak Grove, a peak demand reached in December 2016, and the payback of capital credits.



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

# Large crowd on hand for annual meeting

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are helping change the world, which is inspirational and life-changing for all people.”

Members also heard an address on the state of the cooperative from General Manager Mike Gray, and a report from WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. Both reports were printed in their entirety in the evening’s program.

In addition to the business meeting, members were able to visit informational booths by vendors such as Missouri One Call, Johnson County Community Health and the Johnson County Master Gardeners, who also provided three plants to be given away with the evening’s prize drawings. WCE linemen were on hand to give live demonstrations on electrical safety and how power outages are located and repaired.

WCE employees were also on hand to sign up members for Smarthub and answer questions regarding the app which allows members to access their accounts, make payment arrangements and pay their electric bill.

Staff from the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives were on hand to visit with members on various programs including the Rural Electric Youth Tour and CYCLE.

A special display this year included photo highlights from lineman Brandon Steffen’s trip to Bolivia with NRECA International to bring electricity to the villages of Dos de Junio and El Torito. Steffen spent several weeks in the country last summer along with fellow



WCE Lineman Brandon Steffen tells WCE board member Sandra Streit and her family about his experiences in Bolivia with NRECA International. Steffen and linemen from around Missouri and Oklahoma spent several weeks in the country last summer energizing the villages of Dos de Junio and El Torito.

linemen from Missouri and Oklahoma. During the meeting he showed photos of the work the linemen did and what daily life was like in the primitive villages of Bolivia, and talked to interested mem-

bers about his experiences on the trip.

Members could also 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 Milton Swainston of Knob Noster) and several energy certificates.



James Bollmeyer (left) of Warrensburg receives the smart TV he won at the WCE annual meeting from Line Foreman Jeff Miller.



Board President Densil Allen Jr. introduces WCE Board members during the 78th annual meeting in Warrensburg on Aug. 4.



(Left Photo) Ben Nuelle provided the dinner music at the 2017 Annual Meeting of Members. (Above) Buddy Bear made some new friends in Niko Carroll, 5, (left) and Carter Carroll, 3, of Odessa. Their parents are Steven and April Carroll.



Director Stan Rhodes (left) visits with members Betty and Leo Bauerle of Corder prior to the start of the business meeting.



Milton Swainston of Knob Noster receives his certificate for the grand prize free month of electricity from WCE Data Records Coordinator Lois Brunckhorst.

## 2017 Annual Meeting Prize Winners

**Grand Prize Free Month Electricity**  
Milton & Judy Swainston

**TV (NW Electric)**  
James & Judith Bollmeyer

**\$100 Energy Certificates**  
Marvin & Joyce Schemmer  
Sharon Reynolds

**\$50 Energy Certificates**  
Donald & Mary Ann Smith  
Dale & Colleen McCashew  
Stephen & Denise Brown  
Gary & Constance Davis

**\$25 Energy Certificates**  
Larry & Linda Mudd  
Gary & Paulette Frerking  
Donald & Tracie Gill  
Carol Gibson  
Kevin & Darlene Buckstead  
Sandra Rickey  
Robert & Linda Dooling  
Harlan Eagleson

**KIDS--Grand Prize Bike & Helmet**  
Vladstone Martin  
Olivia Strobel

**Lego Building Set**  
Jaxon Long  
Tera Rucker

**Stuffed Buddy Bear**  
Wyatt Hall  
Kimber Goppert

**Alltec Model Bucket Truck**  
Jeffrey & K.L. White

**Amazon Gift Card (Berry Consulting)**  
George & Darla Waddle

**Titlist Golf Balls (Altec)**  
Galen & Eunice Cobb

**Plants (Jonsson Co. Master Gardners)**  
Robert & Betty Lou Evans  
Fay Sweeney  
Eugene & Doris Hubbard

# CYCLE challenges students to become greater leaders

What better place to be on a hot July day than sitting in a hotel conference room with more than 100 of your peers? NOWHERE -- if that conference is the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience and your peers are among the best and brightest the state of Missouri has to offer!

"We want to be a leadership development stepping stone for the youth," said Barry Hart, CEO of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives, the sponsoring organization of the conference. "By us getting involved in helping

develop their leadership potential, we hope these delegates go back to their communities, continue to learn from local leaders, educators and co-op staff so when they get into positions of leadership later in life, they won't forget the cooperatives' way of thinking."

Each year, Missouri electric cooperatives send delegates to Jefferson City for three days of leadership activities, cooperative education and hands-on government. Delegates secure a spot at this award-winning youth conference through their participation in the Rural



WCE CYCLE delegates visit the Missouri State Capitol Building. Front row (l-r) Jessica Paxton of Warrensburg High School, Alice Evans of Holden High School and Zach Toole of Chilhowee High School.



Alice Evans (center) and her team participate in a team challenge during CYCLE.

Electric Youth Tour and CYCLE essay contest.

From the introductory "Can You Find Me?" game, students are energized and off and running from daybreak until lights out, forging friendships and discovering more about themselves.

While the conference is short, CYCLE is jam-packed with activity from the team-building exercise "Build a Cooperative" game, to a boisterous game of Missouri Jeopardy, a segment when the teams perform a TV public service announcement based on something they've read in that day's newspaper and a session where the youth learn about their personalities and character through a fun questionnaire.

Of course, what would a trip to Jefferson City be without a tour of Missouri's beautiful Capitol? While there, the students get to sit at the

desks on the floor of the House of Representatives and debate a bill they've written with their CYCLE peers. The fun continues each evening with activities such as a barbecue at the park, a hypnotist and motivational sessions with speakers such as the Rachel's Challenge group, who speaks to students about how they can start a chain reaction of compassion in their own communities. In the Rachel's Challenge presentation, they hear about Rachel Scott, the first person killed in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, and how she stood up and made a difference in the lives of others in just a few short years. This year's delegates were privileged to hear from Rachel's uncle, Larry Scott.

For more information about the 2017 Youth Tour and CYCLE contest, contact Heather Hoflander at 800-491-3803 or [heather@wcecoop.com](mailto:heather@wcecoop.com).

## WCE Life Support Equipment list will be updated

In an effort to better serve its members, West Central Electric Cooperative updates the Life Support Equipment List each year.

"Although we add new entries to the Life Support Equipment List as members call and request to be placed on the list, we seldom get members calling to let us know they need to be removed," Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander said.

"In an effort to keep the list as up-to-date as possible, we create a new list every year."

Members are asked to fill out the following form, and mail it to West Central Electric NO LATER THAN Sept. 30, 2017 to ensure their

name appears on the new list.

The Life Support Equipment List is used by cooperative personnel in the event of a planned outage, for

made in a certain order," Line Superintendent Randy Burkeybile said. "It does no good to go out and repair an individual service when the main line is down.

Until the main line is repaired, there won't be any power to the individual line."

Members requesting their name be placed on the Life Support Equipment List should mail the following form to the Higginsville office.

If you or a family member is on oxygen, please let us know how many hours of back-up you have available.

Please keep in mind that if we do not hear from you by Sept. 30, 2017, your name will be removed from the current Life Support Equipment List.

**If your name needs to remain on the WCE Life Support Equipment List, You MUST fill out the following form and mail it to West Central Electric Cooperative before September 30, 2017, or your name will be removed from the current list.**

example, during extensive repairs or maintenance. The list is not used as a priority list to get service turned back on in the event of an outage.

"The reason this is not a priority service list is because in the event of an outage, repairs have to be

### Request for 2017-18 Life Support Equipment List inclusion

(Please fill out all information completely.)

Name to appear on list: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on WCE account: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Location Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Life support equipment requiring electricity to operate: \_\_\_\_\_

If on oxygen, how many hours back-up? \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out all information completely and mail to Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

## From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held June 22, 2017

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, Richard Strobel, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman, Stan Rhodes and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and General Counsel Shawn Battagler.

### 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 of May 25, 2017; expenditures for the month of May 2017; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

### APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following May 2017 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; and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

### SAFETY REPORT

Gray presented the safety report for the month of May 2017.

### RESTATEMENT OF R&S AND 401(K) PLANS

The board approved a resolution authorizing Gray to execute all necessary documents and to take actions necessary to carry out the amendment and restatement of the RS Plan and 401(k) Plan.

### AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft and Gray reported on their attendance at the AMEC board meeting. Highlights included equipment testing and the resignation of Richard Moore.

### N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported on their attendance at the N.W. meeting. Highlights included an AECL update, and information on wind farms, solar, storm damage, REDLG loan, compensation study and FEMA training.

### AECL ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Board members reported on their attendance at AECL's annual meeting. Highlights included information on renewable energy and power production issues, regulatory issues and coal and gas issues.

### AMEC BOARD MEMBER AND ALTERNATE

Bredehoeft was appointed as the cooperative's AMEC board member, and Gray was named alternate.

### AMEC ANNUAL MEETING VOTING DELEGATE

Bredehoeft was appointed the cooperative's AMEC annual meeting voting delegate, and Simmons was named alternate.

### NRECA VOTING DELEGATE

Bredehoeft was appointed the cooperative's NRECA voting delegate and Gray was named alternate.

### OPERATION ROUND-UP CHARITY

The board continued discussions regarding setting up a charitable foundation based on the Operation Round-Up model. The board created a committee of Simmons, Streit, Swisegood and Strobel to explore the options, scope and structure available.

### CFC INTEGRITY FUND

The board agreed to donate \$250 to the CFC Integrity Fund.

### ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Gray discussed annual meeting preparations, entertainment and other details. Meeting notices were reviewed.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month which included an update on improvements being made at the headquarters, road widening and a turn lane, discussion regarding Democratic Rules of Order and personnel issues.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

### NEW BUSINESS

None.

### MEETING ADJOURNED

# Farmers are urged to take time to reap a safe harvest

It can be an exciting and exhausting time, the culmination of a season of hard work. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes. Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment.

"Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busy-ness of harvest time, it's easy for farm workers to forget about the power lines overhead," says Richard McCracken of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. "But failure to notice them can be a deadly oversight."

Review with all workers the farm activities that take place around power lines. Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance. Keep equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines – above, below and to the side – a 360-degree rule.

"Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it's only a few feet," says Bob Aherin, PhD, CSP & University of Illinois Professor and Agricultural Safety & Health Program Leader. "Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result. Also use extreme caution when raising the bed of a grain truck."

Farm workers should take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Don't use metal poles to break up

bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.

• Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

Operators of farm equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line: Stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so.

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and ground, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result," Aherin said. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.

For more information on farm electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) (Spanish versions of this information are also available on the website).

*Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of creating a safer, smarter world.*

**There are more than 20 million miles of underground facilities buried in the United States. NEVER dig without knowing where the underground facilities are located.**

**To place your free notification, call 1-800-DIG-RITE or 811 or go online at [www.mo1call.com](http://www.mo1call.com)**



**Know what's below. Call before you dig.**

### FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • May 2017

	This month	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Revenue	1,848,226	11,052,573	10,585,526
Power Bill Expense	1,196,263	6,594,417	6,749,153
Operation & Maint. Expense	195,289	1,222,092	1,044,726
Depreciation Expense	172,625	856,342	824,353
Interest Expense	103,195	543,511	514,765
<b>Total cost of Srvcs. (Total Expense)</b>	<b>1,667,372</b>	<b>9,216,362</b>	<b>9,132,997</b>
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(94,973)	436,335	113,112
Other Margins	10,562	133,042	76,433
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>(84,411)</b>	<b>569,377</b>	<b>189,545</b>