



# ElectricNews

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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



**MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY...** Ashley Schumacher, 5, of Lexington, spends some time under the WCE Christmas tree learning about how to save electricity. Ashley visited the annual Member Appreciation Day in Higginsville in December with her grandmother, Marilyn Schumacher.

### 2017 Member Appreciation Day winners:

#### \$25 Energy Certificates

Clarissa Bebout, Bates City  
D.L. Clark, Oak Grove  
Roger Davis, Lone Jack  
Renee Windle, Grain Valley

Elda Goetz, Warrensburg  
Marilyn Schumacher, Lexington  
Karlene Eagan, Odessa  
Bobbi Crawford, Higginsville

#### Willie Wiredhand Ornaments

Mary Jo Ashcraft-Costigan, OG  
Larry Keefe, Lone Jack  
John & Donna Eichhorn, Odessa  
Marcia Hopper, Oak Grove

Wesley Pollard, Warrensburg  
Patricia Ethington, Concordia  
Becky Hoepfner, Mayview  
Kathy Chaney, Warrensburg

## Get your DUCTS in a row

### Winter is a good time to take care of your ducts

Winter is a good time to tackle indoor efficiency projects, such as taking care of your ducts — those big hoses that distribute conditioned air throughout your house. They may be out of sight, out of mind, but unless yours is a brand-new house, it's very likely you're losing conditioned air through leaky ducts. In fact, you may lose as much as 20 percent of the air in the ducts because of holes and poor connections, according to ENERGY STAR.

#### Here are some clues your ducts are leaking:

- High winter and summer utility bills
- Rooms difficult to heat and cool
- Stuffy rooms that never seem to feel comfortable

- Ducts in unconditioned attics, crawl spaces and garages
  - Tangled or kinked flexible ducts
- To fix the leaks, hire a duct specialist or do simple repairs yourself. Here are some tips for the DIYers:

- Find leaks by turning on your heating and cooling system and feeling for air leak drafts, especially at joints or connections.
- Fix the leaks that will make the biggest difference. Seal those that are easy to see and get to. They run through the attic, crawl space, unheated basement or garage. The U.S. Department of Energy reminds us that insulating ducts in the basement will make the basement colder. Consider insulating ducts and basement walls and wrapping water pipes with heat tapes if your basement does not receive conditioned air.
- Use duct sealant (mastic) or metal-backed (foil) tape to seal the seams

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## Members are reminded that Operation Round-Up program begins this year

As we dive further into the year 2018, WCE members are also one step closer to being able to help their local communities through the West Central Electric Operation Round-Up program.

Operation Round-Up will be put into action later this year, and will benefit organizations throughout the WCE service area.

The Operation Round-Up program will allow members' bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar each month with proceeds being contributed to area organizations such as emergency departments, schools, community groups, etc. to assist with community projects and programs.

**Members are reminded that everyone will be automatically enrolled in this program, however you may**

**contact WCE with your request to opt out if you do not wish to participate.**

The average member contribution will total around \$6 per year, with the maximum being just over \$11. Donations are also tax-deductible. Although \$6 to \$11 may not seem like much, when totaled together with other members' contributions, we can make good things happen. Some cooperatives have returned millions of dollars to their local communities.

Disbursement of funds will be determined by an Operation Round-Up board who will evaluate the requests and determine how funds are distributed.

Members who would like to opt-out of the Operation Round-Up program are asked to contact West Central Electric with your request.



**2018 West Central Electric Cooperative  
Scholarship**

**I. Amount of Scholarship**

This year, approximately 20 high school seniors will receive a \$600 West Central Electric Cooperative scholarship for use at any college, university, trade or technical school.

**II. Selection Criteria**

A. The applicant will be selected without regard to sex, race, creed or color.

B. The applicant's parent or legal guardian must be a current WCE member.

C. A cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average is required.

D. A minimum ACT score of 18 is required.

E. A high school transcript must accompany the application.

\*\*Applications received without transcripts WILL BE PENALIZED.

F. The Scholarship Committee will consider financial need and special circumstances when selecting the winner of this scholarship. Please address financial need and any special circumstances when answering question # 7 on this application.

G. Please submit a recent photo along with your application. This photo will be used for press releases and for the WCE newsletter if you are selected a winner. Winners who have not included a photo with their application will appear as "photo not available" in all publicity materials.

H. All scholarship applications MUST BE TYPED.

I. High School counselor must sign your transcript. (Home school transcripts are accepted, but must be signed by the teacher.)

J. All of the above requirements, except item G, must be met for the application to be considered

**III. Restrictions**

A. Children and grandchildren of current West Central employees and directors are not eligible to apply.

B. Four-year recipients of the John and Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship Trust will not be considered.

**IV. Application Deadline**

All applications must be postmarked on or before March 16, 2018. Send applications to: Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

**V. On-line applications**

Scholarship applications are available on line at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) under the heading "Youth Programs." Applications may be printed and mailed, or filled out on line and emailed. If you choose to email your application, please also either email your photo as a jpeg to [heather@wcecoop.com](mailto:heather@wcecoop.com) or mail a photograph along with your transcript. Applications submitted via email must arrive by 4:30 p.m. March 16, 2018.

**VI. Winners' Notification**

Recipients of the scholarship will be notified by May 1, 2018 by mail.

# Scholarship money is available to area high school seniors

Each year, West Central Electric Cooperative makes an investment in the future of our communities by awarding thousands of dollars in scholarships to area high school graduating seniors.

Three different scholarships are available through WCE; the West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship, the John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship and the West Central Electric Cooperative and State Technical College Electrical Distributions Systems Scholarship.

The **John and Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship** Trust is a renewable scholarship given to seniors active in 4-H. Scholarship amounts depend on the current status of the trust fund.

The **West Central Electric Scholarship** is a one-time award given to graduating seniors each year. The number of scholarships awarded depends on the availability of funds. WCE will award approximately 20 scholarships worth \$600 each.

The **West Central Electric Cooperative and State Technical College Electrical Distribution Systems Scholarship Program** provides a two-year college scholarship to a student interested in pursuing an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electrical Distribution Systems at State Technical College, Linn, Missouri. This scholarship provides for students a quality college training program, a two-year college degree, and on-the-job training.

Details on all three scholarship programs can be found in this newsletter or online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop). Applications are available online, at either of WCE's two offices, from area high school counselors, or at the Jackson, Johnson and Lafayette county University Outreach and Extension Centers.

For more information on West Central Electric Cooperative's scholarship programs, contact WCE at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Scholarship applications are available from the following places:

- ◆ at your high school counselor's office,
- ◆ online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop),
- ◆ from West Central Electric Cooperative's Higginsville office or Oak Grove office.

Call WCE at 1-800-491-3803 for more information.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Students entering the

**2018 Rural Electric Youth Tour contest**

Essays must be turned in to the Higginsville office no later than 4:30 p.m. February 16, 2018.

Essays submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 16, 2018.

Applications for the

**2018 John & Kathryn English Memorial Scholarship**

must be postmarked no later than Feb. 23, 2018.

Applications submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 23, 2018.

Applications for the

**2018 West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship**

must be postmarked no later than March 16, 2018.

Applications submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. March 16, 2018.

Applications for the

**2018 WCE and STC Electrical Distributions System Scholarship**

Must be postmarked no later than April 1, 2018.

Applications submitted via email must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. April 1, 2018.

**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.*

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## Winter is a good time to take care of your ducts

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and duct joints, including between the furnace and ducts; between registers and floor, wall or ceiling; and between duct sections. Also seal ducts accessible in the heated part of the house.

- Don't use duct tape for sealing, as it will dry out and fall off. There are UL-approved products in the market that will do the job of sealing and not dry out. UL-listed foil tape and water-based duct

sealant are good options.

- After sealing, wrap the ducts in insulation, usually fiberglass, all the way around the ducts to avoid gaps. Also insulate hot water or steam pipes at the same time.

For more on ducts, go to ENERGY STAR at [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home\\_improvement.hm\\_improvement\\_ducts](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_ducts).

## What to do if you have water in your ducts

While the Environmental Protection Agency does not generally recommend cleaning air ducts, if moisture and mold are present inside ducts, they need to be replaced. Here's what to do if there's moisture in ducts:

- Correct any water leaks or standing water
- Remove standing water under cooling coils of air handling units by making sure drain pans slope toward the drain

- Maintain humidifiers in use
- Provide direct access to heat exchange components and drain pans for proper cleaning and maintenance
  - Have a qualified heating and cooling system contractor remove any insulation material that is wet or visibly moldy or has a foul smell
  - Don't use steam cleaning and other methods involving moisture on any kind of duct work

## 10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

-  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
-  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
-  Turn off lights when not in use.
-  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
-  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
-  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
-  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
-  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
-  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
-  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

\*Programmable thermostats not recommended for use with heat pumps.

**\*Because of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the regular December board meeting was rescheduled for Jan. 4, 2018. Therefore, the minutes of the November and December 2017 board meetings and financial reports will be published in the March issue of Electric News.**

## Reminders on how to stay safe when winter storms hit

Snow and ice storms are an inevitable part of the winter season. However, they can lead to downed power lines and outages. Remember the following tips to stay safe and warm should you find yourself in the dark after a severe winter event:

- Never touch a fallen power line, and assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. Call WCE at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942 to report it immediately. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities.

- In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source—such as a fireplace, propane space heater, or wood stove—may be used. Extreme caution should be taken.

- Plan to stay in an area of the home where the alternate heat source is located.

- Fuel- and wood-burning heating sources should be vented. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions.

- Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are working properly.

- Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home. Do not use charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.

- If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house

for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage. Follow manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.

- Take special care not to overload a generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.

- Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Ideally, your family will stay warm until the power comes back on. But keep an eye on family members for signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, drowsiness, and mental and physical slowness. The elderly and young children are particularly vulnerable to hypothermia. Call 911 immediately if you notice these symptoms. At least one telephone in the house that does not depend on electricity should be available in the case of a power outage.

Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Ag Safety Database)

Chris Grammes writes on safety 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.