



ElectricNews

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

Farm Bill update: bill is about much more than ag policy

Bill also affects rural electrification

Every five years, the U.S. Congress considers the Farm Bill, a bill that has huge implications for America's electric cooperatives, including West Central Electric. The bill sets food and agriculture policy for the entire nation, affecting everything from what crops are grown to funding for food nutrition

programs. The Farm Bill is due to be reauthorized by the federal government this year.

The Farm Bill is about much more than agriculture policy. It promotes rural economic development and allows co-ops to finance basic electrification activities, deploy high-speed communications and enhance smart grid technologies. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national service organization, America's electric cooperatives

are working to ensure lawmakers in Washington know what our priorities are for the 2018 Farm Bill. Here are a few.

Economic development

Co-ops aren't just electricity providers. They are engines of economic development - powering and empowering the communities they serve. The Farm Bill's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program is an important source of financing for economic development projects in rural communi-

ties. Over the last two decades, electric cooperatives have partnered with community stakeholders on hundreds of projects to renovate hospitals, build libraries and expand businesses. Co-ops have asked Congress to ensure ample funding for this program in the next Farm Bill and beyond.

Innovation

Not-for-profit electric co-ops are natural incubators of innovation, because they are driven solely by the needs of

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Storm Safety

Know what to do when spring storms strike and trees, power lines are down

Beware. Spring can usher in more than April showers. Now through the summer months, thunderstorms can quickly roll in and tornadoes can touch down, often during the afternoon and evening hours, according to researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Severe Storms Laboratory.

Follow these tips from NOAA and the American Red Cross to keep you and your home safe when tornadoes and severe thunderstorms come your way.

- Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged tree limbs.

- Listen to local news or National Weather Service broadcasts to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.

- If in a mobile home, immediately head to a sturdy shelter or vehicle. Mobile homes, especially hallways and bathrooms, are not safe places to take shelter during tornadoes or other severe winds.

- Designate a family meeting place for shelter during and after a storm. If possible, go to your home's basement, a small interior room, or under stairs on the lowest level. Also, have a battery-operated weather radio handy along with emergency supplies.

- Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical equipment and corded telephones.

- Remember that there is no safe place outside during a severe storm. If you are caught in a storm while on the road, the American Red Cross urges drivers to turn their headlights on, try to safely exit the roadway, and park. Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt on and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. If thunder and lightning is occurring, avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.

- Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.

- Stay safe after a storm. Remain indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Also, stay away from downed power lines and avoid flooded areas, power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity.

Report power outages and any downed power lines to WCE immediately at 800-491-3803, 816-565-4942.

Learn more about storm safety at <http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/thunderstorms>

Sources: *The National Oceanic and*



SPRING STORMS... This could be a frequent sight as spring nears. Make sure you know what to do to prepare for these impending storms and the power outages that could accompany them.

Atmospheric Administration's National Severe Storms Laboratory, and American Red Cross

B. Denise Hawkins 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.

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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

Important notice to members regarding email contacts from West Central

Members who have an email address on file with the cooperative will, on occasion, receive notifications from WCE via that address.

Some of the notifications that may be

received are listed as: "Bill Available," "Payment Declined," "Credit Card Expired" and "Payment Successful." The email notifications will be generated from the following address:

"courier-no-reply@smarthub.com."

To receive these notifications, members will need to make sure they have allowed mail from this sender. The email WILL NOT have the name

"West Central" in the address or the reference line.

Please direct questions regarding WCE email contacts to Sandy Starke at 800-491-3803, 816-565-4942 or sandy@wcecoop.com.

Operation Round-Up program will be put into action this year

In accordance with the 7th Cooperative Principle -- Commitment to Community -- West Central is continuing to move forward in the establishment of an Operation Round-Up program designed to assist the communities in our service area.

Operation Round-Up will be put into action later this year, and will benefit local and area organizations with financial assistance.

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 con-

tact 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.

Farm Bill is about much more than ag policy

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members like you. The USDA runs a number of programs that help fund innovative projects, including the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP). Co-ops use these programs to save members money by financing investments in energy efficiency, constructing new renewable energy resources and deploying electric grid modernization technologies. REAP and RESP help ensure that co-ops are poised to meet the evolving needs of their members.

USDA Rural Development

The health of our nation is dependent on a healthy rural America. Rural America grows most of the food, generates much of the power and manufactures many of the goods consumed by the nation. USDA's office of Rural Development operates many different programs that provide fundamental assistance to those rural communities. Co-ops have asked Congress to maintain a strong rural development in the Farm Bill to reaffirm the importance of these programs.

We look forward to working with Congress and other stakeholders to pass a Farm Bill that promotes economic growth in rural America and allows co-ops to continue meeting the needs of their members.

Dan Riedinger 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.



THE FARM BILL IS IMPORTANT TO RURAL AMERICA...Rural America (including farmers like Neal Bredehoeft, above) grows most of the food, generates much of the power and manufactures many of the goods consumed by the nation. Co-ops have asked Congress to maintain a strong rural development in the Farm Bill to reaffirm the importance of these programs.



From the Manager...

The value of electricity continues to shine

How many of us remember dropping into a West Central Electric Cooperative office with our parents and grandparents to pay the light bill? Whether you do that in person, by mail or online today, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than just keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences we enjoy in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside your home.

Count up your televisions, desktop, laptop and tablet computers, printers, your gaming consoles, music and video players and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps them working comes from West Central Electric.

Have you looked around your kitchen

lately? Between the coffee maker and toaster and the microwave and electric skillet, a lot of us have added several other modern small appliances.

If you've got a craft nook or workshop, the power tools and machines you use to cut and shape your projects are either plugged in or recharged from the outlets connecting your household wiring to West Central Electric.

You use electricity to run all these devices, and we still keep the lights on, use the stove, heating and air conditioning, and get hot water from tap. The good news is, even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain, especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates and education have increased at rates of 3 percent or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have been up by more than one to 2 percent annually, and even bread costs have risen better than a half point on average.

Electricity costs rise about 1 percent a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. That means we're doing more things with less energy.

Kilowatt hour use per household dropped by 8 percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9 percent decline reported by all electric utilities, nationwide.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and we're always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why West Central Electric urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances, offers a rebate program for energy-efficient appliances and promotes technology designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most

water heating, laundry and dishwashing outside of peak rate periods help reduce the co-op's overall power demand. They also give you opportunities to control or even trim your monthly utility bills.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's going to become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected technologies become even more important in our lives.

The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices. That number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll depend upon West Central Electric for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

That's why we're always working to provide service that's reliable, keep it affordable, and make it even more valuable to our members—you, your family and your neighbors. We are proud to be your local electric cooperative.

Spring Energy Efficiency Tips

Cost of planting trees is worth the investment

March and April are excellent months to plant new trees, keeping in mind you'll need to water them weekly when you don't get at least an inch of rain.

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.

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.

Be sure you call Missouri One Call at 1-800-DIG-RITE or 811 before digging to ensure you don't dig into buried utilities.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants also can shade the ground and pavement around your home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your house. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or drive-

way. 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 the house where wetness and continual humidity could cause problems.

A few spring cleaning, no-cost energy savers

As you're cleaning and tidying up after winter, here are 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. Use natural light to illuminate your house, particularly if you're still using incandescent light bulbs.

Wash your clothes cold, and 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 .08 cents per kilowatt-hour. Switching to cold water could save about \$60 a year. Of course, always wash a full load not a partial.

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 a load.

Missouri's Green Tax holiday will continue April 19-25

Once again, Missouri's annual Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday will be held April 19-25. You can 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 and dryers
- Water heaters

- Dishwashers
- Air conditioners
- Furnaces
- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Heat pump

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.

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.

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held November 21, 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, 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 CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Oct. 19, 2017; expenditures for the month of October 2017; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following October 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; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray gave the safety report for the month of October.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Jarman presented the report of the Strategic Planning Committee. He discussed progress with the strategic plan, and discussions regarding renewing the strategic plan in 2018.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Jarman presented the Scholarship Committee report. The board approved a proposal to increase the West Central Electric Scholarship from \$500 to \$600, and to continue awarding the same number of scholarships.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included discussion on the Spirit Trail request for contribution, the board retreat Jan. 23-24, NW managers' meeting at AECL, RUS refinancing of FFB loans, NRECA proposed resolutions, cybersecurity issues, solar issues and headquarters construction update.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The board discussed details of Operation Round-Up.

NEW BUSINESS

The December 2017 meeting was moved to Jan. 4, 2018.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Directors adjourned into executive session.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • <i>Statement of Operations</i> • October 2017			
	This month	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Revenue	1,997,612	22,053,580	21,973,312
Power Bill Expense	1,249,168	13,309,005	13,696,891
Operation & Maint. Expense	202,206	2,254,920	2,299,944
Depreciation Expense	175,785	1,729,123	1,663,344
Interest Expense	<u>104,005</u>	<u>1,065,016</u>	<u>987,192</u>
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,731,164	18,358,064	18,647,371
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(13,413)	895,262	673,281
Other Margins	<u>12,062</u>	<u>282,602</u>	<u>184,101</u>
TOTAL MARGINS	(1,351)	1,177,864	857,382

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 at 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.)

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held January 4, 2018

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 Sheri Smiley.

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 Nov. 21, 2017; expenditures for the month of November 2017; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 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; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray gave the safety report for the month of November.

VOTING DELEGATE FOR NRECA

Ahmann was elected the NRECA delegate and Simmons was elected alternate.

VOTING DELEGATE FOR CFC

Simmons was elected the delegate for CFC and Ahmann was elected the alternate.

VOTING DELEGATE FOR FEDERATED

Bredehoeft was elected the delegate for Federated and Swisegood was elected the alternate.

AMEC PAC CONTRIBUTION

The board agreed to give \$500 to the AMEC PAC.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported on his attendance and reported highlights including the report from MECIP regarding electrical contacts, Rural Missouri's new format, electric charging stations and the legislative report.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Swisegood gave the NW report for December, including AECL updates, NW outages and the budget for 2018.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Gray presented the Hazard Mitigation Plan, following which a resolution was passed, adopting the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update for Missouri Electric Cooperatives as it pertains and applies to West Central Electric.

2018 MEETING DATES APPROVED

The following 2018 meeting dates were approved (all at 10 a.m. unless noted):

January 24 (retreat) 8:30 a.m.	May 24	September 25
February 22	June 26	October 25
March 22	July 26	November 29
April 26	August 23	December 20

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included: donations for 2017, discussion on the Spirit Trail request for contribution, board retreat Jan. 23-24 and an Operation Round-up update.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED

FINANCIAL REPORT • <i>Statement of Operations</i> • November 2017			
	This month	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Revenue	2,137,926	24,191,506	23,926,775
Power Bill Expense	1,325,740	14,634,745	14,966,376
Operation & Maint. Expense	193,191	2,448,112	2,461,158
Depreciation Expense	176,515	1,905,638	1,832,784
Interest Expense	<u>103,731</u>	<u>1,168,746</u>	<u>1,103,701</u>
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,799,177	20,157,241	20,364,019
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	63,529	958,791	624,166
Other Margins	<u>11,511</u>	<u>294,113</u>	<u>196,087</u>
TOTAL MARGINS	75,040	1,252,904	820,253