



West Central Electric Cooperative

May 2022

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

ElectricNews

Electrical Safety Month

Important reminders
about power cords and
outlet safety
Page 7

PAGE 2
The 2022 Nominating
Committee meets in
May; find members and
contact information here

PAGES 4-5
WCE remembers a
special co-op member on
what would be her 100th
birthday

PAGE 6
Please return this life
support form if you have
medical equipment that
requires electricity

Board of Directors Qualifications:

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the cooperative who:

(A) is not a member who continuously uses cooperative energy and service at his/her permanent, primary place of residence; or

(B) is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy supplies to the cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the cooperative; or

(C) Has been an employee of the cooperative within the last three (3) years.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board of directors.

Memo on seasonal connections...

Members requesting seasonal connections on meters for wells, irrigation systems, etc. are asked to have either the map number or pole number available when they call in. Having one of these pieces of information will help cooperative employees ensure the right meter is being connected at your location. Please direct any questions to WCE at 816-565-4942 or 800-491-3803.

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Headquarters:

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349

To report outages 24/7:

Call 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • or report outages at www.westcentralelectric.coop under "View & Report Outages"

District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

General Manager:

Mike Gray

Board of Directors:

Densil Allen, Jr. *President*; Clark Bredehoeft, *Vice-Pres.*; Dale Jarman, *Treasurer*; Robert Simmons, *Secretary*; Stan Rhodes, *Asst. Sect.*; Donald Fore, *Director*; Richard Strobel, *Director*; Sandra Streit, *Director*; Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2022 West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee

Following is a list of the members named to the 2022 West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving on West Central Electric Cooperative's board of directors, contact any of the committee members in your district listed below. The committee will convene on May 12, 2022 to nominate individuals to be placed on the official ballot. Nominees will be voted on at the annual meeting Aug. 5, 2022 in Warrensburg.

District I

Adam Heater
8968 Powell Rd.
Odessa, MO 64076
816-529-6594

District III

Virginia Haller
510 NE 201st Rd.
Warrensburg, MO 64093
660-747-7330

District II

Lance Teiman
P.O. Box 212
Higginsville, MO 64037
660-909-2127

Jeremy Sanders
613 NW 1001 Rd.
Holden, MO 64040
660-909-3165

District IV

Paul Nolte
711 W. 35th St.
Higginsville, MO 64037
660-909-7285

Verna Jenkins
1151 SW 1050 Rd.
Holden, MO 64040
816-732-6946

District V

Stephanie Othic
41 SW 251 Rd.
Centerview, MO 64019
660-864-6687

William Grauberger
513 NW 1201 Rd.
Holden, MO 64040
816-277-4171

**Terms will expire for District 1 director Donald Fore, District 2 director Stan Rhodes and District 4 director Sandra Streit*

Members will elect ONE director each from Districts 1, 2 and 4.



(L-r) Wyatt Wilkinson and Nathan Johnson were presented with their journeyman lineman certificates recently for completing the apprenticeship program and earning journeyman status.

WCE linemen achieve journeyman status

West Central Electric linemen Nathan Johnson and Wyatt Wilkinson completed the last level of their apprenticeship and achieved journeyman lineman status in March, according to WCE Operations Manager Randy Burkeybile.

Johnson was a recipient of the WCE/State Technical College Electrical Distributions Systems Scholarship in 2014, and was hired by the cooperative following graduation in 2016. He works out of the headquarters office in Higginsville.

Wilkinson was also an EDS scholarship recipient, and joined WCE in 2017. He currently works on a crew out of the Oak Grove location.

“We have appreciated having Nathan and Wyatt as a part of our team here at the cooperative, and having them come up through the scholarship and internship program, completing their apprenticeship and earning their journeyman status,” Operations Manager Randy Burkeybile said.

Donald Fore is appointed to WCE Board of Directors

West Central Electric member Donald Fore has been appointed to the cooperative’s board of directors. He replaces former director Max Swisegood who retired earlier this year.

Fore is the new representative for District 1, and resides in Oak Grove. He is a retired math teacher and a farm owner. He is active in his local community as a member of the Community Services League Board of Directors and attends First Baptist Church. He is a former member of the Oak Grove Board of Education.



Fore

Fore said he is looking forward to serving the cooperative, and working for the good of the membership.

“The retiring board member has set a lofty example for me to follow. I will do my very best to continue his service to West Central,” he said. “Having spent 18 years as a member of Oak Grove School Board, I feel as if I am prepared to continue that service.”

Working to keep electric service safe, reliable and affordable is Fore’s first priority.

“I believe each director’s number-one goal is to work as a board member to provide the present services at the most reasonable cost to members, and I look forward to working with this outstanding board of directors,” he said.

Fore is no stranger to some of the workings of the cooperative, as he has served on the WCE Nominating Committee working to nominate qualified members for board positions. Fore will serve out the remainder of Swisegood’s term, which expires in August 2022.

DIG SAFELY
CALL 811 FIRST

Safe Electricity.org

Remembering a life that saw tragedy, joy, hardships and peace for the sweet Hawaiian lady who witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor

(Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the December 2002 issue of Rural Missouri. It is being reprinted in memory of WCE member Louise Gregson on what would have been her 100th birthday, May 24, 2022. Gregson passed away earlier this year.)

True to the tradition of Hawaiian hospitality, Louise Gregson bustles around her kitchen, fussing over her latest guest. Her home is neat, with mementos of her life on the island distinctly leaping out to grab one's attention.

"I must offer you something," she says in a soft voice, as she produces a wooden pineapple bowl with fresh dates and macadamia nuts.

Her brown Hawaiian skin glows, making her look much younger than her 80 years. Her eyes twinkle when she speaks of her native island, but they grow dark as she remembers the events of Dec. 7, 1941...Pearl Harbor.

Louise remembers waking up early on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941 in her peaceful little town of Wahiawa, Oahu. She remembers stirring quietly, so as not to awaken her husband, Dewey. She dressed in a sky-blue maternity blouse and navy blue skirt, appropriate for the church service she was about to attend. She can still smell the fresh flowers as she walked out into the beautiful sunshine. Turning the corner she saw two friends; the Japanese woman was a restaurant owner and the other was the wife of a Japanese man who managed the main PX in Schofield Barracks. Louise wondered why they were pointing so excitedly toward Schofield. Their news would change her life.

"Where are you going?" the two friends asked.

"I'm going to church in Honolulu," she replied.

"Oh, don't go!" they begged her. "Japan is attacking us!"

The events that followed were vivid.

"It was a horrible day. We just couldn't believe what was happening," Louise remembered. "I said to them, 'What? What did you say?' and they told me the Japanese were attacking us. It was hard for me to believe them, because people of Japanese ancestry usually do not speak of their mother country in a derogatory manner."

They knew Louise did not believe them until they pointed out the smoke billowing on the horizon near the Army barracks nestled at the foothills of Kolekole Pass.

"Suddenly, about a block from us, a lone pilot bravely flew his plane," Louise recalled. "He was flying low, just above the trees, and above the school house. When he flew by, I could see him as clearly as as could be, and the rising sun emblem on the side of that plane. I could see, but it was still unbelievable."

What she lacks in stature, she makes up for in strength. Louise was on her way to church, and that, she told her friends, was exactly where she intended to go. As she traveled by taxi through Kipapa Gulch, an enemy plane was strafing the highway.

"The taxi driver was elated," Louise wrote in a personal account of that day. "He let go of the steering wheel, threw his hands up gleefully, and cried 'Banzai! Banzai! Banzai! (Hurray!)' He was openly cheering for Japan, his motherland. I was so provoked at this traitor! I wondered if I should hit him over the head then or later.

"I reached down for my handbag with which to hit him, but was immediately reminded of my unborn child who was due in two months, and I refrained from carrying out my thoughts," she said. "Nevertheless, I felt he was aiding and abetting the enemy to destroy our peace and freedom. I was very thankful to God that we were not strafed or injured."

As they neared the area of Pearl Harbor, Louise saw the sights that are etched in her memory forever.

"I could see a lot of activity in the air. There were so many planes flying. I knew they were Japanese planes. They were all that drab, olive color, and so I watched very closely for the rising sun emblem," she said. "Pearl Harbor was to my right. The Arizona was the closest ship to the highway, about a quarter of a mile away. It was terrible."

She later learned that the attack she witnessed was five torpedoes ripping into her port side, and that several aerial bombs jolted and shook her decks. An armor-piercing bomb detonated in the forward magazine, setting off the main battery.

"So powerful was its impact, that it dropped two of her gun turrets and the conning tower 20 feet below their natural positions," she said "The ship just burst into flames, and then listed. It seemed that she raised up first, and then listed, and all around was oil, and the water was on fire. That was a sight that I can never forget, and it is pictured in my memory always."

She felt sorrow for the servicemen and their families – none of whom she knew well, but several she had seen at church services in Honolulu.



Louise Gregson on her 95th birthday



(Top left) Louise Gregson as a dancer in her sister-in-law's hula school, or "halau." (Right) Gregson relaxes in her Oak Grove home after a trip back to her native Hawaii, a gift from her children for her 80th birthday. (Bottom left) The attack.

"The other thing I thought of was the poor Japanese Americans who would be hated and persecuted by the people who live here," she said. "My heart cried out for all of them, but no sound came from my lips. I wept inside of me, but no tears flowed. There was only pain."

As she watched the destruction around her, Louise said she felt at peace.

"It was strange, but I had no fear at all. My concern was for those who were under attack. I guess at a time like that, you are either fearful, or you are not, and for me, I was not fearful," she recalled. "I just know my faith in God was very strong, and that he was the one who protected me from harm, because I certainly could have been hurt very badly that day, but I knew his hand was over me."

Ironically, the church she planned to attend was the Japanese Branch. She wondered how the news would affect those gentle, mild-mannered people. When told of the attacks, all services were cancelled, and everyone left. Louise stood alone in front of the church, wondering what to do next. She did not think it was wise to pass Pearl Harbor again. She was now in Kalihi, and decided to go to her aunt's house about 10 miles away. Many, she said, still did not know what had happened. Very soon, martial law was declared, and it was three days before Louise was able to leave for home.

"My husband was frantic," she remembered. "But, we couldn't do anything but stay right there in my aunt's house. Every window, every crack had to be covered so that no light could escape. It was for our protection from the enemy in case they had any

ideas of returning for a counter attack."

In all, 96 ships were attacked at Pearl Harbor. Simultaneously, Hickam Base, Wheeler Airfield, Bellows Field, Schofield Barracks and other military installations were targeted.

"I know there is a God, and I know he is in charge. Without really thinking about it, I knew I wanted to serve him all the days of my life," Louise said with a smile. "It is true he has protected me many, many times, and that was only one instance where my life was spared."

Indeed Louise Gregson is blessed, as her Hawaiian name indicates: "Makamaeonalani – beloved of the heavens; precious."

Louise Clark Gregson was a native of the Hawaiian islands. By 1965, she and her husband, Dewey Clark, had sent four of their five children to Iowa to begin their college educations. The children encouraged the family to join them stateside, so Louise and her youngest daughter left the island on Jan. 18, 1966. The temperature was 80 degrees in Hawaii, but upon landing at Eppley Airfield in Omaha, Nebraska where Louise had transferred with United Airlines, the temperature was -22. A few months later, her husband was transferred to Offutt AFB, employed as a civilian. On his fourth day at work, Dewey Clark was fatally injured in a tractor accident. Louise then moved to Iowa where she lived for two years. She married Albert Gregson, and they lived in Independence, Mo. for 20 years and then Blue Springs, Mo. Louise eventually moved to Oak Grove, Mo., which she believed to be "The Promised Land," and where she lived until her death.

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 JULY 1, 2022 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 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

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.”

Inclusion on the list also does not waive disconnection for non-payment.

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 JULY 1, 2022, 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 July 1, 2021, or your name will be removed from the current list.

Request for 2022-23 Life Support Equipment List inclusion

(Please fill out all information completely.)

Name to appear on list: _____

Name on WCE account: _____

Account Number: _____ Location Number: _____

BEST Phone Number to reach you: _____

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.

West Central Electric Cooperative offices will be closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 30

Long is new WCE mechanic

West Central Electric General Manager Mike Gray has announced the hiring of Will Long as the cooperative's new mechanic.

Long works out of the headquarters office in Higginville and is responsible for maintaining the cooperative's fleet of vehicles and equipment. Long said he is looking forward to working in the cooperative world.



Long

Important reminders about power cords and outlet safety

We use electricity every day. This invisible force has become so commonplace that it can be all too easy to overlook possible electrical hazards, even in the safety of our own homes. May is Electrical Safety Month, and a good time to put the most important safety tool you have—your brain—to work.

Knowing what to be on the lookout for and knowing the safe steps to take can make all the difference in preventing accidents. Safe Electricity offers the following home safety tips to help arm you with the knowledge to stay safe and help others stay safe.

Always read and understand the operator's manual before using an appliance or tool.

Make sure recognized safety laboratories, like UL, ETL, or CSA have certified the electrical appliance, tools, and cords you plan on using.

Never use a product with a damaged electrical cord.

Never use extension cords on a permanent basis.

Only use extension cords properly rated for the devices you plan to plug into it.

For the safety of children in your home, install tamper-resistant outlets or protective coverings.

If your outlets are warm to the touch, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker, and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.

Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCIs) in areas that may be wet or damp. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset button monthly to ensure they are working properly.

Never use power tools outdoors if it is raining or the ground is wet.

If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

WCE employees and directors honored for years of service

West Central Electric employees and board members marking milestone anniversaries at the co-op were honored recently for their years of service. Because of the pandemic, an awards ceremony was not held in 2021, therefore awards for 2021 and 2022 were included in this year's ceremony.



2021 award recipients: (l-r) WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr., 10 years; WCE Board Vice President Clark Bredehoeft, 30 years; Director Richard Strobel, 10 years; lineman Derek Cole, 10 years; Operations Manager Randy Burkeybile, 35 years; lineman Brandon Steffen, 15 years and Member Services Advisor Janette Blakely, 20 years. Not pictured: lineman Nathan Johnson, 5 years; lineman Jesse Underwood 10 years; lineman Zac Wallpe, 15 years; serviceman Tim Frerking 20 years; serviceman Jeff Campbell, 30 years;



2022 award recipients: (l-r) IT Manager Tim Bowler, 20 years and WCE Board Treasurer Dale Jarman. Not pictured: lineman Wyatt Wilkinson, 5 years.

ARE YOU USING YOUR Co-op Connections Card ?

You can save money by looking for this decal at area businesses!

Co-op Connections* Card

Touchstone Energy* Cooperatives

FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Feb. 25, 2021

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: Densil Allen Jr., Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman Robert Simmons and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, Manager of Accounting Michael Newland 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 January 26, 2022; expenditures for the month of January 2022; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following January reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Newland presented the January 2022 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. He reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. He also gave the investment report. He presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios. Deferred revenue was discussed. He provided information for top customers by revenue for the year. The CARES Act Employee Retention Credit was discussed. A motion to proceed with further investigation into claiming the credit was passed.

Operations Report: Randy Burkeybile provided a written Operations Report and presented the report to the board. His report included the following: update on crews, outages for the month, a mechanic's report, and updates on brush crews and right-of-way.

Safety and Engineering Report: Pete Nelson provided a written Safety and Engineering Report and presented the report to the board. Safety meetings, crew visits, and an engineer/staking department report was given. He discussed potential new growth for the year and issues with lead time on supplies.

Member Services Report: Brent Schlotzhauer provided a written Member Services Report. He reported on Operation Round Up, Youth Tour, scholarship applications and gave a Round Up update. He also reported on the Co-op Connections Card, the load forecast study that is being conducted this year and chamber meetings attended.



AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported on the board meeting held Feb. 22, 2022. He provided the department reports to the board and discussed legislation.

NW REPORT

Simmons reported on the N.W. Electric board meeting held Feb. 17, 2022. He reported on the legislative dinner held and the update given to the co-ops by AMEC. He reviewed the financial statistics, reported on the deferred revenue that had been approved, and gave an operations report, including outages.

NW ANNUAL MEETING VOTING DELEGATE

Simmons was named as delegate and Gray as alternate.

REVIEW BOARD ASSESSMENT

The board reviewed the results of the self-assessment they had taken. At the next board retreat the board will review an ethics policy and fiduciary responsibility.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley presented a report on legal matters.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented his monthly Manager's Report. The executive summary from CFC will be reviewed. Nominating committee names are needed by next month. The employee banquet was discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A potential bylaw change to change the requirement for publication of notices was discussed. More information will be brought back at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session at 11:25 a.m. The regular meeting resumed at 12:20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • January 2022

	This month	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Revenue	\$3,314,460	\$3,314,460	\$2,936,441
Power Bill Expense	1,898,255	1,898,255	1,661,319
Operation & Maint. Expense	504,759	504,759	556,198
Depreciation Expense	207,763	207,763	198,232
Interest Expense	113,923	113,923	115,375
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,724,700	2,724,700	2,531,124
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	589,760	589,760	405,317
Other Margins	7,556	7,556	6,964
TOTAL MARGINS	\$597,316	\$597,316	\$412,281

