



West Central Electric Cooperative

October 2022

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

ElectricNews

October is National Co-op Month

**2nd Cooperative Principle:
Democratic Member Control is
in full force at annual meeting**

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**Members win big at the
annual meeting, Gray
delivers his state-of-the-
cooperative address**

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**Members elect Dowell,
Rhodes and Streit; bylaw
amendment**

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**WCE members visit Missouri
Electric Cooperative Building
at Missouri State Fair**



2022 Annual Meeting Prize Winners

Grand Prize

One Free Month Electricity
Billy & Lyla Marshall

\$25 Energy Certificates

Michael & Barbara Russell
Don & Sharon James
Robert & Joy Hotmer
Roger & Ruby Stone
Marjorie Storck
Charlotte Smith
Michael & Kay Stauffer
Loren & Phyllis Limback

\$50 Energy Certificates

Michael & Debra McLaughlin
Jane Everts
Dwight & Sandra Stephens
Brian & Tami Schooley

\$100 Energy Certificates

Bill & Karen Hoepfner
James & Paula Evans

Smart TV

Phillip & Jackie Johnson

Plants from JoCo Master Gardeners

David Richner
Billy Marshall

Boy's Bike with Helmet

Hudson Werneke

Girl's Bike with Helmet

Daisy Burkeybile

Boy's wireless headphones

Everett Guy

Girl's wireless headphones

Caylen Taylor

Stuffed Buddy Bear

Ocean Dawson
Amber Summitt

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.*; Max Swisegood, *Director*; Richard Strobel, *Director*; Sandra Streit, *Director*; Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*

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Gray delivers state-of-the-co-op address at annual meeting

General Manager Mike Gray delivered his final state-of-the-cooperative address before his retirement during the Aug. 5 annual meeting. He told members the cooperative remained stable, and in good financial shape.

Gray reported on the growth of new services in 2021, which he said averaged about 75 more than the average over the last five years.



General Manager Mike Gray

"So far this year, we have built about 90. The past 2 years we have seen the pace of our growth increase quite a bit. At the end of 2021, WCE had 16,653 services in place with an average of 14,554 of them connected each month," he said.

He also reported on maintenance and system improvements as well as some specific projects currently underway including a three-phase line conversion in Jackson County. The project is located north of Oak Grove along Pink Hill Road and is being done due to increased load in this area over the years.

The polar vortex of 2021 was a disaster for many utilities, but Gray told members that the cooperative system was able to handle this severe weather event successfully.

"We set a peak demand of 93,475 kW in February 2021, which is an all-time high for West Central. "Many utilities across the country were forced to have rolling blackouts during this time of record loads but we were able to keep your lights on in spite of the extremely cold temperatures. Our demand cost for 2022 was projected to increase significantly as a result of this storm, but due to action taken by our power supplier, AECI, they were able to recognize deferred revenue to offset the increased expense and keep our demand cost manageable," he said.

Gray reported that the extreme temperatures in 2021, plus the increase in services were reflected in kWh sales

"We ended the year with sales of 275,827,308 kWh, which was our second highest sales ever. Revenue for 2021 was \$29,865,894 an increase from 2020 of \$1,029,603," he said.

Gray also told members that current rates should be adequate to meet financial objectives through 2023, but with natural gas prices spiking along with all other petroleum products, the outlook for the cost to generate electricity in the near future is not favorable.

"Our state and national organizations will continue to lobby our elected officials to keep electric rates as affordable as we can while also being good stewards of the environment," he said.

Gray ended by thanking members for the confidence and support shown to him during his co-op career.

"It has been a great 39 years serving you all," he said.

ON THE COVER: WCE lineman Brandon Steffen congratulates newly-elected director Colby Dowell after the annual meeting.

Annual Meeting is in-person for first time since 2019

With Covid finally under control and no public gathering restrictions, the West Central Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting was held in-person Aug. 5 for the first time three years.

Attendance was down from previous years, however, a good crowd enjoyed the traditional co-op barbecue dinner, informational booths and business meeting. Registered members totalled 538 (down from 775 in 2019) and total attendance was estimated at more than 1,100 (down from more than 1,300 in 2019.)

Director and Bylaw Election

Director Donald Fore was defeated by challenger Colby Dowell in District 1. District 2 Director Stan Rhodes and District 4 Director Sandra Streit ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation. All will serve three-year terms. The bylaw amendment regarding changes to the capital credit list publication was approved 303 to 82.

Other Meeting Highlights

Other highlights of the meeting included a presentation by Jacob Bacus of Oak Grove High School. Bacus attended the 2022 Rural Electric Youth Tour as a representative of WCE.

In his essay titled, "Let There Be Light," Bacus took on the persona of a farmboy born in the 1920s whose family labored daily by hand without the benefits of electricity.

"My earliest memory was of my mom showing me how to heat a



Lineman Brandon Steffen assists a member in signing up for the Co-op Connections Program.

brick to put under my sheets at the foot of my bed for warmth," he said. "My dad employed all of his time working on the farm and teaching my brothers and me to do the same. When my brothers were drafted into

Continued on page 4

Dowell elected to first term on WCE board, Rhodes and Streit retain seats

Two incumbents and a newcomer were elected to serve three-year terms on West Central Electric's Board of Directors, during the 2022 annual meeting Aug. 5.

Stan Rhodes, District 2, and Sandra Streit, District 4, were re-elected by the membership. Challenger Colby Dowell defeated incumbent Donald Fore for the District 1 seat. Fore had filled the unexpired term of former director Max Swisegood following his retirement from the board earlier this year. He was running in his first co-op election.

Election Results:

District 1 -- Donald Fore 158 votes
Colby Dowell 206 votes

District 2 -- Stan Rhodes unopposed/acclamation

District 4 -- Sandra Streit unopposed/acclamation

Dowell is the executive director for the Lafayette County Children's Services Fund, an entity which redistributes more than \$400,000 in sales tax collected annually in Lafayette County. Dowell grew up in a WCE co-op member family, and was a former scholarship recipient.

"I would like to thank the membership for this wonderful opportunity to represent District 1 on the WCE Co-op board," Dowell said. "I look forward to getting familiar with the board and their policies as I work into my position as a new member. Joining the board in a time of transition calls for all hands on deck, and I am ready to do my part."



Directors elected: (L-r) Colby Dowell, Sandra Streit and Stan Rhodes will serve the cooperative for the next three years.

At their re-organizational board meeting held immediately following the annual 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

From page 1

the war, my family began to struggle to keep up with the demands of the farm and went into debt.”



Youth Tour delegate Jacob Bacus

Bacus went on to describe the relief that the REA and electric cooperatives brought to farm families as the luxury of electricity brought stability to the lives of farm families.

“When my family received power, it irreversibly changed our lives for the better,” he said. “Through the REA and subsequent local electric cooperatives, my family and hundreds of others were aided during the struggles of the Great Depression and World War II.”

“Electric Cooperatives brought stability and comfort to rural communities that I previously thought was

impossible,” he said.

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, and separate stories summarizing their remarks are printed in this issue.)

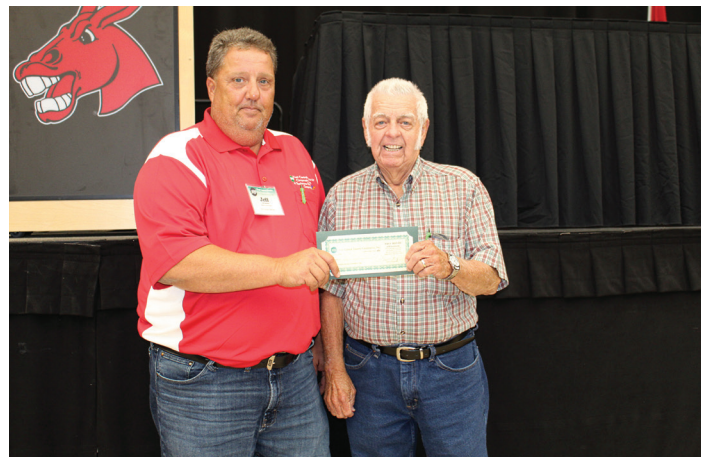
In addition to the business meeting, members were able to visit informational booths by vendors such as Missouri One Call, Life Flight Eagle and the Johnson County Master Gardeners, who also provided two plants to be given away with the evening’s prize drawings. WCE linemen gave live demonstrations on electrical safety and how power outages are located and repaired. Members could learn about the Co-op Connections Program and how they can save money at local and area businesses just by being a co-op member. Members were also able to sign up on site for the app, and pick up a card.

Board members of the WCE Operation Round Up Foundation were on hand to give members more information on the program and show members how the funds collected in the past year have been used to support various community programs throughout the service area.

Members were registered for prizes, including a free month of electricity (won by Billy Marshall) and several energy certificates as well as other prizes. The childrens’ grand prizes were bicycles and helmets, all of which were awarded at the end of the evening.



Girl's bicycle and helmet winner Daisy Burkeybile



Staking Technician Jeff Rhoades presents Billy Marshall with the grand prize certificate for a free month of electricity.



Boy's bicycle and helmet winner Hudson Werneke



Lineman Nate Collins presents Jackie Johnson with the smart TV won during the annual meeting.

Allen's message to members:

We are proud to be your rural electric cooperative

During his traditional message to members gathered at West Central Electric Cooperative's annual meeting Aug. 5, WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. took the opportunity to convey the pride cooperatives take in supporting their members.



Densil Allen Jr.

Allen told members he was glad to be meeting in person this year and that he was proud that the cooperative had successfully handled the

"We Are. Two little words that we use every day; but when we put them together, they help create a unique picture of what it means to be an electric cooperative," Allen began his speech. "We are members. We are owners. We are perseverance. We are strength. We are loyal. We are dedicated.

"We are your rural electric cooperative. And we are proud of the impact cooperatives are making in the world – and more importantly, the impact your cooperative is making in our own little piece of the world, in our communities, for our members," he said.

changes of the past two years and come out just as strong as before.

"In the past two years, many companies have scaled back their service or employee base, altered the way they do business, or even closed their doors altogether. Here at West Central Electric, employees

answered your phone calls and the service trucks rolled when there was a problem to fix. We paid out our capital credits (\$1.5 million dollars' worth). We awarded scholarships and continued to upgrade our system and look ahead to make sure it stays strong in the future," he said.

He went on to report on the success of the Operation Round Up program, and the new Co-op Connections Program. Allen told members about the new website that was launched this summer and reminded them to check the co-op's Facebook page for variety of information.

He also conveyed his thanks to retiring General Manager Mike Gray and praised his leadership of the cooperative during his tenure.

"As you leave here tonight, know that your cooperative is always here, standing strong no matter the circumstances," Allen told the members. "We are grateful for our members. We are grateful for our cooperative. We are grateful that we live in America. And, We are grateful to be a part of the rural electric cooperative system."

"We are proud of the impact cooperatives are making in the world – and more importantly, the impact your cooperative is making in our own little piece of the world, in our communities, for our members."

*WCE Board President
Densil Allen Jr.,*



Round Up Board member Donna Matthews visits with co-op member J.C. Jones during annual meeting



There were lots of goodies from vendors for the kids at the annual meeting, including light-up ball caps from WCE.

2022 Missouri State Fair



WCE employee Janette Blakely took a shift to greet co-op members and fairgoers at the Missouri Electric Cooperatives Building during Missouri State Fair.



WCE Youth Tour alum and new FFA State Vice President Cooper Hamlin dropped by the Missouri Electric Cooperatives Building after completing his officer duties for the day.



Addison Beumer and Makenna Stephens of Alma braved the rain and visited the Missouri State Fair, stopping by the Rural Missouri booth at the Cooperatives Building



Tyler and Taylor Gard and Anniston Inman of Concordia enjoy the racetrack at the Missouri Electric Cooperatives Building

Weather isn't the only cause of fall power outages; blame the animals

As the cool and crisp fall air brings a welcome change for many, with the decrease in temperatures comes the inevitable increase of outages and blinks caused by animals.

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

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

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

"The reason these instances sometimes tend to increase in the fall is because the transformers put off heat," Burkeybile said. "Squirrels,

raccoons and other animals will climb onto the transformers for warmth, and they get into places they shouldn't be. Before you know it, there is a power outage."

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

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

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



Simmons completes board leadership program

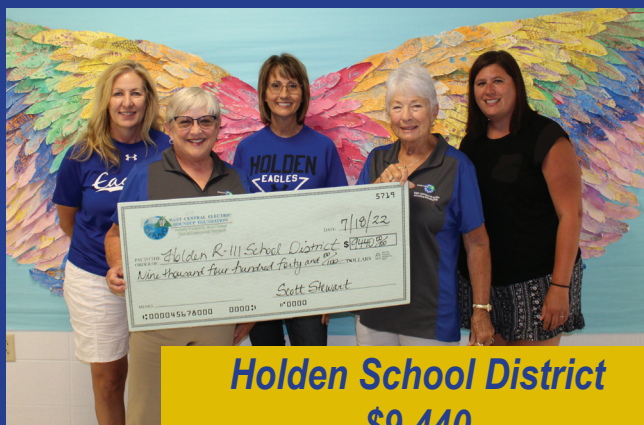
WCE Board President Densil Allen Jr. (left) presents WCE Board Secretary Robert Simmons with a certificate for his recent completion of the Cooperative Board Leadership Program. The leadership program is the second tier in director education and training, following the Credentialed Cooperative Director level. For each level of certification, directors take a series of courses focusing in greater depth on specific industry and governance issues. These include issues such as risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology and policy development. Simmons is a District 3 director, and has served on the cooperative board since 2005.

Second Quarter Round Up Grants



Machpelah Cemetery, Lexington \$950

Funds will be used to purchase a laptop and software to assist with the location of burials and burial spaces and onsite record-keeping.



Holden School District \$9,440

Funds will be used for improvements and updating of the Holden Elementary School library.



FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held July 28, 2022

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, July 28, 2022, pursuant to the bylaws of the cooperative and previous resolution of the board of directors. The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Sheri Smiley, cooperative attorney, 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, Jeremy Ahmann and Donald Fore. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, CFO 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 June 23, 2022; expenditures for the month of June 2022; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Newland presented the June 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. KRTA summaries are available and will be presented over the next several months.

Operations and Safety 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, updates on brush crews and right-of-way, and an update on the wire storage building was given.

Safety and Engineering Report: Pete Nelson provided a written Safety and Engineering Report and presented the report to the board. Issues with Evergy outages were discussed. Safety meetings, crew visits, and an engineer/staking department report was given. The work comp MOD factor was reported on.

Member Services Report: Brent Schlotzhauer provided a written Member Services Report. He reported on Operation Round Up, 4-H Clover Kids Camp, CYCLE, and an update on how ballots are being mailed. Solar systems and rebates given were also reported on as well as chamber meetings attended. Payment drops for offsite were discussed. More options will be brought back to the board.



AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave the statewide report. Items of interest included a legislative report; dues committee report; and an AECI report. Strategic planning session results were discussed. The employee handbook is being updated. New proposals for an auditing firm are being accepted. He reported on the Missouri Rural Magazine, Youth Tour, Online Voting, the ERTC and inflation bonuses were discussed.

NW REPORT

Simmons reported on the N.W. Electric board meeting. He reported on the presentations that were given regarding the ERTC, an AECI report was given, and the salary study was reported on.

WEST CENTRAL ROUNDUP FOUNDATION REPORT

Streit gave the report on donations that had been given.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Mike Gray discussed the annual meeting plans.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley reported on legal matters.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented the monthly Manager's Report. The salary study from Dan Bruning had been provided in writing to the board members. It will be reviewed by the Compensation Committee. He discussed inflationary bonuses for employees that are being offered by other Cooperatives. The board approved giving an inflation bonus to all employees. Upcoming meetings were discussed. The impact of pole shortages due to infrastructure money going towards broadband were discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Bredehoeft reported on the winners of the AMEC awards.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 11:52 a.m. and adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • June 2022

	This month	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Revenue	\$2,658,438	\$16,705,049	\$15,317,391
Power Bill Expense	1,542,846	9,478,712	8,733,782
Operation & Maint. Expense	755,742	3,505,426	3,315,028
Depreciation Expense	212,369	1,261,369	1,202,873
Interest Expense	119,947	680,607	696,032
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,630,904	14,926,114	13,947,715
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	27,534	1,778,935	1,369,676
Other Margins	14,423	96,561	59,764
TOTAL MARGINS	\$41,957	\$1,875,496	\$1,429,440

