

September 2023



West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Electric News

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REMINDER **ANNUAL MEETING COVERAGE** **PUBLISHES IN OCTOBER**

***Because of printing deadlines,
coverage of the
2023 Annual Membership Meeting
held Aug. 4, 2023
will be published in the
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ON THE COVER: WCE CYCLE delegate Cailey Verdeja participates in a mock bill debate on the floor of the Missouri House of Representatives.

Is someone you love heading to college?

Teach students about electrical safety as they head to college

Today's college student uses many electronics for school, work, and play. When used improperly, these helpful gadgets can become electric hazards. If you or a loved one is heading off to college, Safe Electricity has the following tips to prevent electric accidents and fires.

Extension cords are only for temporary use. Dorm rooms may not have enough outlets to plug in all your gadgets at once. If you must use extension cords, use them temporarily and unplug them when not in use.



Consider purchasing power strips with an over-current protector, which will shut off power automatically if there is too much current being drawn.

Use light bulbs with the correct wattage for lamps; if no indication is on the fixture, do not use a bulb with more than 60 watts.

Never tack or nail an electrical cord to any surface or run cords across traffic paths, under rugs or furniture.

Keep all electrical appliances and cords safely away from bedding, curtains, and other flammable material.

Discard or repair damaged electronics. It may be tempting to use an electronic with a frayed cord or damaged plug-in to save money. However, damaged electronics should not be used, since they can shock or electrocute students.

If your lights flicker, electronics shut off, or circuits trip—notify campus staff.

Use only laboratory certified appliances and electronics.

Watch out for overheated outlets. If an electrical outlet becomes so hot you cannot leave your hand on it, there is potential for a fire. Unplug everything from the outlet and notify landlord or dorm officials immediately.

College students should also know what to do if there is a fire, including escape and meeting plans.

There are more than 3,500 fires on college campuses every year. Help prevent fires by understanding electrical safety and sharing what you know with loved ones.

Third quarter 2023 RoundUp funds are awarded



Camp Bobwhite \$5,800

Funds will be used for 160 new chairs for the dining hall to replace chairs that have served campers for several decades and are in need of replacement.

Lafayette County Enterprises \$2,0000

Funds will be used for a new box for the cardboard recycling truck. The facility bundles and stacks many tons of cardboard annually for recycling.



Centerview Baseball & Softball \$1,000

Funds will be used for supplies for volunteer coaches, including balls, catcher's gear, scoring books, etc.

Hitt 4-H Club \$3,000

Funds will be used for the club's Corder Park Improvement Project to include new playground equipment, mulch rubber nuggets and weed control.





WCE CYCLE delegates (l-r) Bradley Guernsey, Samantha Meyer, Michael Dean, Cailey Verdeja and Mason Weber visit the Missouri State Capitol Building.



As his team's spokesperson, Michael Dean explains his team's project in the Build a Cooperative Challenge.

CYCLE challenges students to become greater leaders

For three days in July, Jefferson City was home to some of the best and brightest students Missouri has to offer. The event was the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience sponsored by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives, and it was attended by high school juniors and seniors from across the state chosen to represent their local cooperatives.

West Central Electric Cooperative's representatives were Oak Grove High School seniors Mason Weber, Bradley Guernsey, Samantha Meyer and Michael Dean and Crest Ridge High School senior Cailey Verdeja, who all won the trip through their participation in the 2023 Youth Tour and CYCLE competition held this spring.

The goal of CYCLE is to be a leadership development stepping stone for youth. By cooperatives getting involved in helping develop their leadership potential, the hope is for 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 remember the cooperatives' way of thinking.

Delegates participate in leadership activities, cooperative education and hands-on government. Delegates secure a spot at this award-winning youth conference through their participation in the Rural 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 visit to the Missouri State Penitentiary and the Capitol Building. Delegates also author and debate their own bill.

"I had an absolute blast," Weber said. "I met lots of really awesome people and found electric cooperatives to be very interesting and exciting!"

Motivational sessions with guest speakers include Dan Meers, (KC Wolf) and the Rachel's Challenge group, which shows students 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.

"CYCLE was truly the experience of a lifetime," Meyer said. "My favorite activity was choosing a bill for our groups to propose to the rest of the delegates. I was able to hear all of the different ideas and learn what my group was passionate about. That was truly an amazing thing to experience, and created an incredible and unforgettable bond. CYCLE also taught me that these differences allow us to create friendships we never would've expected."

For more information about the 2024 Youth Tour and CYCLE contest, contact Heather Hoflander at 800-491-3803 or heather@wcecoop.com.



Mason Weber gets to know fellow delegates during the first CYCLE icebreaker called, "Can You Find Me?"



Samantha Meyer and Cailey Verdeja visit with Dan Meers, aka KC Wolf, following his presentation at CYCLE.



Bradley Guernsey (center) and members of the Associated Power team work to solve the Lock Box Challenge.



Teamwork and leadership are two big aspects of CYCLE. Cailey Verdeja and team work together to beat other teams across the finish line.

Harvest

We don't have to remind those who work the land and raise livestock that they have a potentially dangerous occupation. However, due to the nature of the job, and because of long days and tiring work, here are some reminders about electrical dangers on the farm or ranch.

Overhead power lines

If you make contact with a power line, don't get out.

If you make contact with a power line, guy wire, power pole, electrical box or any other electrical equipment, do not get out of your cab or truck. Stay put and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the local utility to de-energize the power. If you must get out due to smoke or fire, make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle, and hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. Another option (after you make a clean exit) is to shuffle or waddle away while keeping your feet together and on the ground.

Once you are out, never try to re-enter the cab or truck.

Remember: If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not get out of the cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground. Call 9-1-1 and wait for us to arrive and cut the power so that you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.

Determine proper clearance

Contact us to measure power line heights; do NOT do this yourself. Once you know the heights, you can determine appropriate equipment, implement and extension clearances. Always maintain at least 10 feet between the power line and the tallest height of the equipment that will be transported. Keep in mind that due to wear, age and even weather conditions, power lines can change height. Please contact us with any concerns. It's good to know power line clearance, but always have a spotter.

Call us before moving or adding a grain bin

The National Electrical Safety Code addresses grain bins and their proximity to power lines with very specific requirements. The requirements are in place to help keep farmers safe: to decrease the chances of farming equipment and machinery coming in contact with power lines. If you are planning on building a new grain bin or remodeling around an area that already has one, contact West Central Electric at 800-491-3803. We can help with specific code requirements. The taller a grain bin, the farther it must be placed from a power line.

Always dig safely

Whether you are installing new fence posts or using large tillage tools, call 811 before you dig to have underground utilities marked. Even if you think you know where buried gas, power and other lines are, don't rely on your memory. Get all utilities marked so that you know for sure. Utility locators dispatched by 811 do not mark private lines.

Use standby generators with care and caution

If you have a standby generator to provide essential power during an outage, be sure to correctly use the transfer switch. Once you properly engage the switch, it stops your farm's generated power from entering utility lines, aka backfeeding, which can electrocute lineworkers who are working to restore power.

General equipment and supply safety

Equipment

- Check and maintain equipment, especially electric cables and hydraulic hoses that have cracks or show other signs of wear.
- Always have someone nearby when entering grain bins or other high-risk areas.
- Shield all PTO-powered machinery and keep others away.
- Outfit tractors and trucks with fire extinguishers.
- Never exit a tractor or truck without placing it in park or engaging the emergency brakes.

Supplies

- Check all buildings and grounds for fire hazards and hazardous materials.
- Assess how any chemicals are stored and make sure children and animals can't access them.
- Make a list of chemicals for firefighters in case a fire breaks out on your farm or ranch.
- Establish a safety boundary around gas and fuel tanks.
- Don't skimp on safety: wear eye and ear protection, gloves, and face masks and respirators when appropriate.

Discuss safety concerns with children and explain safe operating procedures. You can never start too young, and they watch what you do.



SHARE the ROAD
with Farmers

**Be safe.
Be courteous.**

Farm season means sharing the road with large farm equipment. Farmers must move slowly in large equipment, but public roads are often the only available routes.

When you find yourself following or meeting large farm equipment on the road, do the following to keep everyone safe:

- 1** Be alert and cautious, and give large farm equipment and other slow-moving vehicles space.
- 2** Do not pass if you are in a "No Passing Zone," or in any area where it is not safe to do so, such as intersections, bridges and railroad crossings, among others.
- 3** Be careful when you do get the chance to pass. Oftentimes, farmers will move their equipment over when it is safe to do so.
- 4** Do not tailgate.
- 5** Make sure the tractor is not trying to make a left turn before you pass on the left.

Share the road with care. Farmers are just trying to get to and from their job, too.

Source: Texas Table Top (Texas Farm Bureau)

SafeElectricity.org®

Safety

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held June 29, 2023

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the office of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 29, 2023, 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. Secretary Robert Simmons caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Allen, Simmons, Clark Bredehoeft, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Colby Dowell and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Michael Newland and Cooperative Attorney Sheri Smiley.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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, 2023; expenditures for the month of May 2023; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following May reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoefflicker presented the May 2023 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. She reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. She also gave the investment report. She presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and

Operations Report: Operations Manager Scott Gard provided a report to supplement the written Operations Report. He reported on fleet and that two new small bucket trucks were delivered. Pole changes and new services were reported on. Training given to crews was reported on. He reported on outages for the month. A report was given on brush crews and right of way.

Safety and Engineering Report: Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided a report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. Safety meetings were reported on. The staff met to review responsibilities during a major storm event or disaster. A statewide audit was done by AMEC and only minor changes were suggested. Crew inspections were held and no safety violations were observed. An engineering staking department report was given. He gave a report on lost time accident numbers.

Member Services Report: Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer provided a report to supplement his written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment. He reported on Youth Tour, CYCLE and the annual meeting. A net metering report was given. Internal job shadowing was reported on. He dis-



cussed the flyer being circulated for a solar farm. He reported on rebates and chamber meetings he attended.

APPOINT VOTING DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE FOR NRECA REGION 8-10

Newland was appointed as the voting delegate and Simmons as the alternate.

POLICY AND BYLAW COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee reported they are working on a drug policy to present to the full board.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported on the meeting he attended June 5-6.

NW ELECTRIC REPORT

The next meeting is June 30.

CFC FORUM REPORT

Directors who attended the meeting gave a report on the speakers.

LEGAL REPORT

Smiley gave a legal report.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. He provided potential dates for the board retreat for January 22-26, 2024. He discussed his MIP class that he has completed. He went over the strategic plan for the cooperative. The cost of a rate study by Toth and Associates was discussed. The board voted to allow up to \$24,000 for the rate study. Staffing was discussed. A new compliance director for the co-op was discussed. A potential new substation at Lone Jack was discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 12:00 p.m. and adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • May 2023

| | This month | YTD 2023 | YTD 2022 |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue | \$2,287,285 | \$13,973,280 | \$14,046,611 |
| Power Bill Expense | 1,454,493 | 7,744,004 | 7,935,866 |
| Operation & Maint. Expense | 991,729 | 3,277,441 | 2,749,683 |
| Depreciation Expense | 223,834 | 1,109,219 | 1,049,001 |
| Interest Expense | 117,213 | 600,025 | 560,660 |
| Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense) | 2,787,269 | 12,730,689 | 12,295,210 |
| Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses) | (499,984) | 1,242,591 | 1,751,401 |
| Other Margins | 24,546 | 119,345 | 82,139 |
| TOTAL MARGINS | \$(475,438) | \$1,361,936 | \$1,833,540 |

