

March 2023



West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Electric News

RoundUp Foundation helps many

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Changes in co-op
rebate program for
2023 are announced

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Missouri Move Over
Law also includes
utility vehicles

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WCE needs teachers for
co-op sponsored Energy
in Today's Classroom

Take Control & Save announces changes to 2023 rebate program

A few changes in the cooperative rebate program have gone into effect with the new year. Those changes include an updated form for Level 2 EV charging stations, an increase in the incentive for Home Energy Weatherization, and the elimination of rebates for programmable timer engine block heaters and C&I HF motors. Current guidelines for charging stations and home energy weatherization rebates:

Electric Vehicle Level 2 Charging Station

- For qualifying Electric Vehicle Level 2 Charging Stations
- Equipment must be new and UL approved/certified.
- Limit two (2) rebates per member address.
- Rebate: \$250.00

The cooperative reserves the right to complete an on-site inspection of the charger after installation. Electric vehicle charging stations that receive rebates may be subject to cooperative load control programs.

Home Energy Weatherization

- Incentive up to \$750 per home, \$25,000 for multi-unit complexes

This program is a 50/50 cost-shared incentive for cooperative members for weatherization improvements done in conjunction with an approved energy audit.

Rebates are also offered on heating and cooling equipment, water heaters, programmable thermostats and more, and incentive programs on lighting and energy audits continue.

For current equipment and qualifications, visit www.westcentralelectric.coop, click on "Saving Energy" and go to "Energy Saving Rebates."

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:

Michael Newland

Board of Directors:

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

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What can your

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get you at this month's featured businesses?

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Animal Health

PURINA FEEDS
Nutrena & Kent Feeds
stgrental@ctcis.net

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Ph. 816-625-1018
Cell 660-232-1356

\$5 off
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once per month*

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Install the app or visit www.connections.coop to find participating businesses in your area and across the nation

*Find the complete list of local deals at www.westcentralelectric.coop

ON THE COVER: (L-r) "Big Sister" Camryn Cummings and "Little Sister" Emelia Acevedo of Warrensburg, participants in Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Johnson County. BBBS is only one of the many organizations which have benefitted from more than \$218,000 and counting in grants from WCE's Operation RoundUp program. Details page 6

Missouri Move Over Law includes utility vehicles

Drivers in Missouri are aware, or should be, of the “Move Over Law” that requires motorists to change lanes if safe to do so, or if unable to change lanes, to slow down when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle. Many may not realize, however, that designation also extends to utility and other vehicles which may be stopped along side of the roadway performing official duties.

The law states, “Upon approaching a stationary vehicle displaying lighted red or red and blue lights, or a stationary vehicle displaying lighted amber or amber and white lights,” drivers must change lanes or slow down. Complying with that law can be a matter of life and death for emergency workers, law enforcement, transportation workers and utility workers like West Central Electric linemen. Failure to comply can result in fines and/or imprisonment.

“The move-over law helps make the roads safer for all emergency workers, not just police and firemen,” WCE Engineering Manager and Safety Coordinator Pete Nelson said. “West Central’s linemen work on the roads every day and it is important for drivers to not be distracted, as well as slow down and move over, so we all can go home safely.”



WCE workers will always have signs warning motorists they are approaching a work zone reminding them to move over or to slow down if it is not safe to change lanes, or if the roadway is a two-lane roadway.

Burkeybile readies for retirement after 37-year career

After a career spanning 37 years and roles from laborer to operations manager, Randy Burkeybile will bid good-bye to the cooperative in March as he prepares to enjoy retirement.

“It is both exciting and scary,” he said. “I have never known the aspect of not having a job, and after all these years it will be quite a change; a whole new chapter in my life.”

Burkeybile started at the cooperative in July 1986 as a laborer, and literally worked his way from the ground up. Joining the cooperative at the most basic entry-level, he started immediately working on his apprenticeship, earning that designation by November of that year. He worked his way through the apprentice program for the next several years, and was named journeyman lineman in August of 1991. In April 2001, he was named foreman.

During his stint as an “outside employee,” Burkeybile worked in every weather condition imaginable, many times volunteering to travel to other states to assist with system repairs following catastrophic events.

“One of the events that stands out the most to me is Hurricane Katrina. We were down there right after the storm and we were in some pretty devastated places, working hard to do what we could to get the power restored,” he said. “We had a place to sleep at night, even though it had no electricity, and we were being fed.”

Crews stayed weeks at a time and rotated in and out for many weeks providing assistance to fellow cooperatives nearly destroyed in some areas by the storm.

“To see so many people that all they had left was what they had in their cars, no place to go, but just driving around almost aimlessly,” really affected the lineworkers there to assist, he said. But the most poignant memories were the ones where those with nothing tried to show their appreciation to those there to help.

“Many were so thankful for us being there, and they would continuously stop and offer us water or what food they might have,” Burkeybile said. “Wow.”

It wasn’t, however, without its lighter moments.

“I am not sure about this one car that stopped and offered us deodorant,” he said. “I know I was hot and sweaty, but I definitely had to chuckle over that.”

Following his more than two decades of working the lines, Burkeybile was named line superintendent, and moved inside the office building to run the linework segment. In December 2016, he was named operations manager.

“I went from working with my hands and climbing poles, and getting to have the excitement of seeing the lights come on during outages to having mostly mental work and coordinating crews to get the lights on. It was a huge change,” he said.

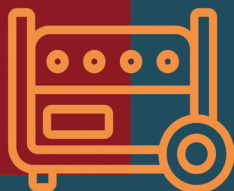
Burkeybile said the greatest reward has been “the feeling of hopefully making positive changes at our co-op.” He said he will miss the camaraderie with his co-workers as well as the inner satisfaction of getting the lights back on for the co-op members during outages.

“I really appreciate my guys and the great job they have done over the years. They have definitely made my job easier,” He said. Burkeybile lives in Higginsville with his wife, Kim. They have two grown children, Devyn (Alli) and Kristen, and two grandchildren, Daisy and Kohen.



Burkeybile

What to do before using a PORTABLE GENERATOR



Prepare

Install battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home; ensure they are working properly.

Position

Place a portable generator at least 20 feet from windows and doors; do not use one in a garage or carport.



Read

Carefully review and then follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Protect

If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy (not a carport).



Refuel Safely

Turn off your portable generator and let it cool down before refueling.

Inspect and Maintain

Inspect a portable generator before each use and make sure it is properly maintained.



Using a portable generator can be useful during an outage; however, use one correctly to prevent CO poisoning and to stay safe.

 **Safe
Electricity.org**

Generator Safety

Our Lives are on the Line

The safety of you, our members, and our employees is a top priority at West Central Electric, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit—on both sides of workers—to make sure the line cannot be energized while work is being done.

But even after these measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands.

WCE is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly.

In 2005, a lineman died in Flomaton, Ala., when he contacted a power line that was energized by an improperly installed generator. Ronnie Adams, 41, of Winterville, Ga., was working to restore power after Hurricane Dennis. He was married and had two teenage children.

Of course, no one would ever purposely cause the death of a lineworker. Nevertheless, a generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems dead.

And WCE employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages, but we urge you to follow the safety guidelines on these pages before operating one.

Fuel your knowledge before powering up a generator

Before you grab your portable generator to use it for backup power, there are important lifesaving safety steps you should know. It is best to familiarize yourself with how to use a generator properly before needing one.

Before using a portable generator, be sure to do the following:

- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. **Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.**

- Always plug appliances directly into generators. Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a **transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.**

- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.

- Ensure your generator is properly grounded.

- Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.

- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.

- Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.

- Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.

- Never fuel a generator while it is operating.

- Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation. Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.

To learn more about safe generator use and electrical safety in general, visit SafeElectricity.org.

What is a Generator TRANSFER SWITCH?

A transfer or throw switch, sometimes called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.

The transfer switch has an important job.

The switch is typically used for generators rated at 5,000 watts or more.

It connects the generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.

In other words, the transfer switch changes or transfers the power load from one source to another. It prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

The type of switch depends on the type of generator.

A permanent standby generator has an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home. Standby generators are called just that because they automatically turn on when the power goes out.

Not all permanently installed generators are standby

versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

Portable generators can also be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

Always use a generator safely.

Learn more at: www.safeelectricity.org



RoundUp Foundation nears \$218,000 in grants

Are you currently participating in the Operation RoundUp program? Did you know this program has funded numerous community projects totalling nearly \$218,000 in the past few years? Did you know we need YOU to help us keep this program going and help us improve our communities?

HOW IT WORKS

Members allow the cooperative to round up their electric bill each month to the next nearest dollar, with those pennies going into the RoundUp fund for community projects.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST ME?

Literally pennies per month. The average donation per member during the last billing cycle prior to this newsletter publication date was **31 cents**. The yearly average is approximately \$6, but all of those pennies put together can fund many useful community projects.

WHAT HAS OPERATION ROUNDUP FUNDED?

Operation RoundUp has funded a **total of 57 projects** for entities all around the service area including food pantries, school districts, senior centers, emergency services, and more. There are MANY more than

the few on the following list, but a small sample includes funding:

- **Concordia and Santa Fe High School Backsnack Program** that sends food home for the weekend with students who don't have enough
- **Alma Fire Protection District communications equipment upgrade** so emergency services such as police and fire departments can reliably communicate with each other in emergency situations
- **Knob Noster Jubilation Center** to help supply clothing, household items, small kitchen appliances, hygiene items, tools, etc. free of charge to those in need
- **Johnson County Livestock Committee** to assist with fencing at the Johnson County Fairgrounds
- **Trinity Lutheran School** to help install a school security system with cameras and safety doors at the entrances to the building
- **Holden Boy Scouts** to help purchase an equipment trailer
- **Chilhowee School District** to purchase hands-on learning tools for kindergarten and first-grade classrooms
- **Refuge on Ming** to replace windows at the homeless shelter

First quarter 2023 RoundUp grants



Concordia United Methodist Church \$3,500

Funds will be used for new fencing and restoration/replacement of broken headstones at Zoar Methodist Cemetery. Some date to the 1700s.



HCC Network \$2,000

Grant will help fund Project Connect, a one-day public health event providing uninsured and underserved residents with services such as mammograms, dental extractions, haircuts and several other services.



Helen's House \$2,000

Funds help provide clothes and shoes for children as well as personal hygiene items needed to get a positive start to the school year.



Lafayette Co. Extension Council \$5,000

Grant will help Fund "On My Own" program, a real-life simulation designed to teach youth about earning a living and supporting a family.





Presented by



Missouri's
Electric
Cooperatives

Location:
Courtyard by Marriott
Jefferson City

ENERGY

August 1 - 2, 2023



in Today's Classroom

Educators in the middle school and high school grades who have a background in science, math, agricultural science and building trades are ideal candidates for this course.

**Learn from industry experts and earn professional development credits.
Energize your classrooms with exciting topics and free educational tools!**

Contact your local electric cooperative to be considered for the course and to learn more about the program.



FROM THE WCE BOARD

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Dec. 29, 2022

The meeting, was called to order by Vice President Clark Bredehoeft. Sheri Smiley, cooperative attorney, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman, Jeremy Ahmann, Robert Simmons and Colby Dowell. Densil Allen Jr. joined by phone. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and CFO Michael Newland.

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. 30, 2022; expenditures for the month of November 2022; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 2022 reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Newland presented the November 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 ratios were reviewed.

Operations and Safety Report: Scott Gard provided a written Operations Report and presented the report to the board. A total of 13 outages were reported last week. Work is being done on a subdivision on Route DD. The wire storage building is complete and brush crews will be done by the end of the year.

Engineering Report: Pete Nelson provided a written Safety and Engineering Report. Crew inspections were held and no safety violations were observed. Scobee will begin two line conversions after Jan. 1. West Central will build underground services as soon as we receive pad mount transformers.

Member Services Report: Brent Schlottzauer provided a written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and amount collected, Member Appreciation Day and an update on the TurboNet USDA loan request.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave a report on the meeting he, Gray and Newland attend on Dec. 7. (AMEC's) Rob Land, Heather Berry and Linda Bolten are retiring so there are several positions to fill. Newland was named as the AMEC alternate board member.

NW REPORT

Simmons gave a report on the meeting he, Gray and Newland attend-



ed.

The budget was discussed. AECI had three good months financially.

SECTION 5 – SERVICE RULES & REGULATIONS

Section 5 of the Service Rules and Regulations was approved as presented.

RESOLUTION FOR GM TO SERVE ON NW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Newland was appointed to the NW Board of Directors.

AUTHORIZE SIGNATURES FOR BANK ACTIVITY

Officers and/or directors were authorized to sign or endorse checks, drafts or other evidences of indebtedness made payable to the cooperative for the purpose of deposit into the cooperative's accounts.

ROW CONTRACT

A motion to approve three circuits of clearing was approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented the monthly Manager's Report. Newland reported on being accepted to the NRECA MIP Program. Further discussion was held regarding Lafayette County and their broadband Initiative.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Strobel asked the retiring general manager three issues he would pursue if he was staying. Gray mentioned:

- 1) Better security for office personnel
- 2) Re-evaluate the TWACS system
- 3) Continued maintenance on the system and plant

The board discussed these items. Simmons was approved as the NRTC voting delegate. Newland also updated the board on personnel transitions at both office locations.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered executive session at 12:20 pm and adjourned at 12:25 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • November 2022

	This month	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Revenue	\$2,580,659	\$29,923,118	\$27,885,223
Power Bill Expense	1,559,183	17,116,061	15,733,696
Operation & Maint. Expense	643,869	7,116,783	6,510,256
Depreciation Expense	218,114	2,340,585	2,227,452
Interest Expense	115,869	1,262,755	1,275,204
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,537,035	27,836,184	25,746,608
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	43,624	2,086,934	2,138,615
Other Margins	33,966	247,690	169,784
TOTAL MARGINS	\$77,590	\$2,334,624	\$2,308,399

