

May 2024



West Central Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# Electric News

## May is Electrical Safety Month

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WCE Nominating  
Committee announced  
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Co-op employees  
recognized for milestone  
years of service  
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## **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](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) under "Report Outage"

#### **District office:**

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

#### **Website:**

[www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://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*; Jeremy Ahmann, *Director*; Colby Dowell, *Director*; Elizabeth Houtsma, *Director*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## **2024 West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee**

Following is a list of the members named to the 2024 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 16, 2024 to nominate individuals to be placed on the official ballot. Nominees will be voted on at the annual meeting Aug. 2, 2024 in Warrensburg.

### **District I**

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

Charles Bartram  
8679 Christy Rd.  
Odessa, Mo. 64076  
816-230-8192

### **District III**

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

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

### **District II**

Lance Tieman  
P.O. Box 212  
Higginsville, Mo. 64037  
660-909-2127

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

### **District IV**

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

Laura Smith  
660 SW 301st Rd.  
Warrensburg, MO 64093  
660-909-3612

### **District V**

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

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*\*Terms will expire for District 1 Director Jeremy Ahmann, District 2 Director Clark Bredehoeft, and District 4 Director Dale Jarman. Members will elect ONE director each from District 1, District 2 and District 4.*



## WCE employees, director receive service awards

Several WCE employees and a director were recognized recently for milestone years of service to the cooperative. Receiving their service pins were (l-r): Member Service Representative Stacy Barnett, 25 years; Journeyman Lineman Adam Beck, 10 years; Accountant Pam Fuenfhausen, 20 years; Director Jeremy Ahmann, 10 years; Member Service Representative Brandy Dukes, 5 years. Not pictured: Communications Specialist Heather Hoflander, 25 years.

# Cooperatives: We are Better Together

There's a song by Jack Johnson called "Better Together" you may have heard. It might remind us of how electric cooperatives got started.

In case you are a new member of this electric cooperative, or have never heard the story, it goes like this: Step back in time to the 1930s or earlier, and if you lived outside the city limits chances are really good that you had no electricity. That's because existing power companies could not find a way to make a profit from the few people living in rural areas.

To help end this "second-class citizenship," President Franklin Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration, better known as REA, to provide low-interest capital to build new power lines. Its goal was to ease the burden on those power companies so that they would be willing to extend their lines into rural America.

Unfortunately, it didn't turn out that way. There were no takers for those low-interest REA loans.

That's when farmers and other rural people determined to get electricity got together and decided "no" was not an acceptable answer. They asked REA if they could do the job themselves, and REA took a chance on them.

The result was more than a thousand electric cooperatives organized across the United States. In short order, poles and lines snaked across the previously unserved landscape. Rural people celebrated "The Day the Lights Came On" as they found new ways to put electricity to work in their homes.

They discovered an important concept in forming their electric cooperatives: We are always better together. That concept is true whether it is a sports team working toward a state championship, a citizen running for office or a community recovering from a devastating natural disaster.

We see the same thing today in our co-op boardroom. When a new idea comes up, there is much debate. Some of the older directors might remember a time when we tried it before and it didn't work. Newcomers

to the board point out what has changed. Everyone will have some concept on how this might improve the community. If enough directors think the idea has merit, it will come up for a vote.

And that's the interesting part. Pass or fail, the directors leave the boardroom united behind the decision.

Recently the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association held its annual meeting. Its president, Tony Anderson, had this to say about electric cooperative unity:

"We all have different personalities in our network and even in our boardrooms, but we all work as one to make decisions that drive co-ops forward. Our co-ops are stronger

together. We have to keep showing up for each other and do the hard work if we want to have a positive impact and get things done."

In other words, we are "Better Together." I wonder what other great things we can do when we work together for the good of all? Let's all think about that and work to make our little part of the world a better place in which to live — together.



**WCE linemen and outside employees in 1963 when the move was made to the new headquarters building (present location) in rural Higginsville.**





# Ensuring our 'why'

## The reason electrical safety is top priority

Educating our members about electric safety is an important part of our mission at West Central Electric, but so is practicing what we preach every day as we work to provide safe, reliable and affordable power.

"Electrical safety is a vital part of what we do, from educating our members on how to stay safe, providing safety demonstrations for community and school groups, and posting safety tips online and in your West Central Electric News," said WCE Safety and Compliance Coordinator Jacob Schowengerdt. "But on the other side of the meter, our employees and crews are also putting safety first as they go about their daily jobs."

Whether crews are installing a new service, setting new poles, or moving lines, all jobs start with a job briefing or "tailgate session." This is when crews meet prior to starting any work to determine each person's role in the assigned job. Tailgate sessions include discussion on possible job hazards, work procedures, special precautions like traffic control, energy source controls, review of PPE (personal protective equipment such as gloves, sleeves, etc.), and any questions crew members have about the job. Crew members inspect the job site, their personal tools and their PPE prior to beginning any job out on the system.

Safety procedures at the job site are important for keeping employees, members and the general public in the area safe, especially since the majority of the time crews work the lines "hot," which means power is not disconnected to complete a job or make repairs unless absolutely necessary.

"We know members do not want to be without power, so crews work on lines while they are still energized, making safety a vital part of the process," Schowengerdt said. "In addition to personal protective equipment, buckets are made of fiberglass, trucks are grounded, and lines are wrapped with rubber coverings and blankets while work is done."

Crew inspections are also a part of the process according to Operations Manager Scott Gard.

"During crew inspections, job site safety is evaluated, and we ensure that all crew members know the details of the job," he said. "We make sure the tailgate session sheet is filled out, and that in the event of an emergency, crews know their location and how to quickly and efficiently get help."

No matter how quickly a job can be done, taking time to ensure safety is always top priority.

"We want everyone to be able to go home to their families each night," Gard said. "That is our 'why.'"



# ALWAYS STEER CLEAR OF OVERHEAD AND UNDERGROUND POWER LINES



Always look up and look out for overhead power lines. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Regardless of the task, always keep a 10-foot minimum clearance between you or an object you are holding and an overhead line, including the drop-down service line.

Power lines are buried and run underground as well. Always call 8-1-1 or visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) before digging to get underground utilities marked.



## BE MINDFUL OF POWER LINES WHEN COMPLETING THESE TASKS:

- Home maintenance: Examples include cleaning gutters, being on the roof or using extended tools to wash windows or skim a pool.
- Yard work: Examples include trimming trees, carrying ladders and digging.
- Transporting tall objects: Ladders are not the only extended objects people use outdoors. Be careful any time you move a tall object or tool.
- Contracted and DIY projects: If you are planning any project that requires digging, ensure underground utilities are marked.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines and think about what is below them. Contact can happen in an instant.

If there is a damaged/downed power line or padmount transformer (green box), do not go within 50 feet of it.



# 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, 2024 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 outage.

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

**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, 2024, or your name will be removed from the current list.**  
*You may also email the information to [heather@wcecoop.com](mailto:heather@wcecoop.com)*

“The reason this is not a priority service list is because in the event of an outage, repairs have to be made in a certain order,” Operations Manager Scott Gard said. “It does no good to go out and repair an individual

you have available.

Please keep in mind that if we do not hear from you by JULY 1, 2024, your name will be removed from the current Life Support Equipment List.

## ***Request for 2024-25 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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, or email [heather@wcecoop.com](mailto:heather@wcecoop.com)





# Having a backup plan for medical devices can be lifesaving

If you or someone in your household depends on life-sustaining medical equipment that requires electricity to operate, having a back-up plan is crucial to ensuring the safety of your health.

"Although West Central Electric does everything in our power to avoid potential outages, such as maintaining an aggressive right-of-way program and keeping equipment updated and in good working order, electrical systems sometimes fall victim to outages," Operations Manager Scott Gard said. "Although the cooperative does what it can to help, it is best to have a back-up plan in case severe weather causes prolonged outages."

WCE maintains a medical emergency list so we know which members are out there with medical equipment, but inclusion on the list is not a guarantee of priority service.

"Outages must be repaired starting with the main lines and then moving down to secondary lines and finally individual service lines," Gard said. "Members are also reminded that the cooperative is only responsible for anything up to the meter. When the issue occurs on the member's side of the meter (anything from the meter to the structure), the member rather than the co-op is responsible for the repair."

To ensure you are prepared in case of an extended outage, here are some tips to consider:

- Have an emergency plan in place with friends and family that out-

lines the places you can go in the event of a long-term outage.

- Before an outage occurs, find out if your medical equipment can run on a back-up power source (such as a generator), and for how long. (See manufacturer's recommendations.)

- Keep a full charge on battery-powered devices, or have extra batteries available.

- If recommended by the manufacturer, consider purchasing a portable battery pack to power devices.

- Gather related resources that will last for two weeks, including batteries, supplemental equipment and prescriptions.

- Realize that local shelters and hospitals may also be experiencing an outage, and may be at capacity or have limited resources, including auxiliary power.

- Think about other special equipment you may need such as coolers for refrigerated medicine.

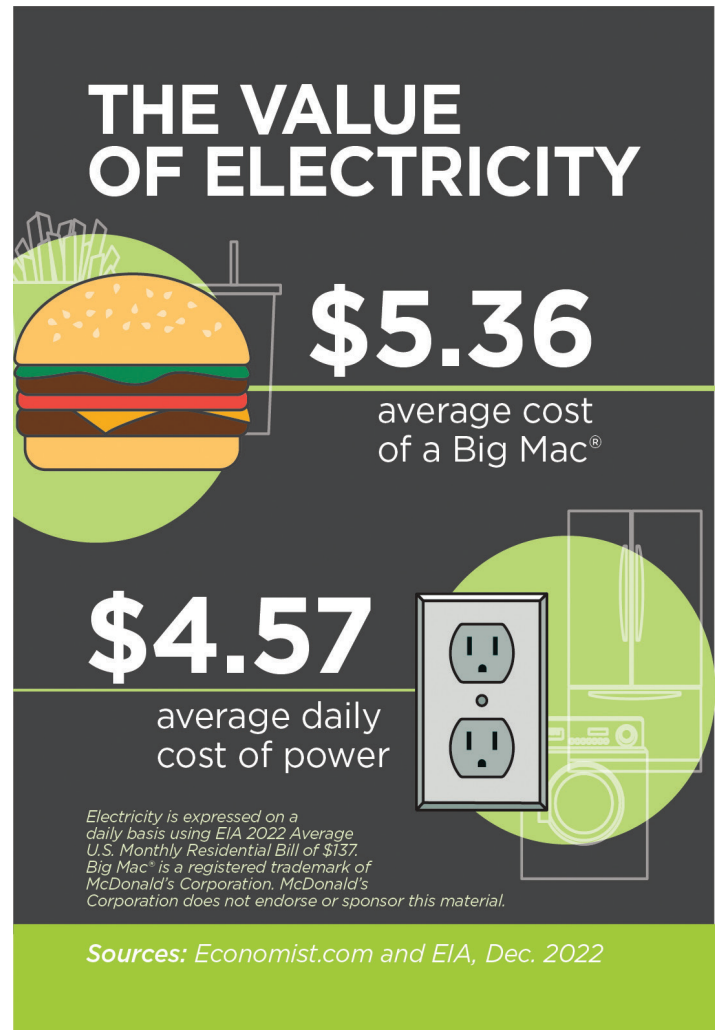
- Like any important device, keep up regular maintenance on medical equipment.

- Keep a file that includes the device's manufacturer, serial numbers and photos of the device.

Learn more about how to prepare for an emergency situation at [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).



**FUTURE LINEWORKER...**WCE Operations Manager Scott Gard shows Concordia High School student Gavin Ohrenberg the ins and outs of climbing a pole. Ohrenberg recently spent the day shadowing Gard at the cooperative.





# FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Feb. 22, 2024

The meeting was held at the offices of the cooperative located in Higginsville, Mo. at 10 a.m. on Feb. 22, 2024, 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. 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, Dale Jarman, Robert Simmons, Jeremy Ahmann and Elizabeth Houtsma. Colby Dowell was absent. Also present were General Manager 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 25, 2024; expenditures for the month of January 2024; new membership applications and membership terminations.

## APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following January reports were approved:

**Financing and Treasurer's Report:** Accounting Manager Rebecca Hoefflicker presented the January 2024 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 KWH sales and ratios. She presented a resolution regarding RUS for the board to consider. The resolution passed.

**Operations Report:** Operations Manager Scott Gard provided an oral report to supplement his written Operations Report. He reported on crews and recent peer reviews. Pole inspection results were updated. There were no major outages to report since the Jan. 9 snow and wind storm.

**Safety and Engineering Report:** Engineering Manager Pete Nelson provided an oral report to supplement his written Safety and Engineering Report. AMEC trained the linemen on transformer connections with a new training display. The statewide coordinator's conference was attended. Crew visits were done. An engineering/staking report was given.

**Member Services Report:** Brent Schlotzhauer provided an oral report to supplement his written Member Services Report. His report included RoundUp enrollment and RoundUp updates. A Youth Tour update was given. Programs given to local schools and chamber meetings attended were reported on. Net metering contracts, incentive rates and the member survey were reported on. The AMEC Legislative Conference was attended. Issues with the US mail and payments being mailed and received late were discussed. Impacts on bills of the two weeks of cold weather in January were reported on. An update on the Higginsville office was given.



## BYLAW DISCUSSION

Jarman reported on the Bylaw Committee's meeting and potential changes being reviewed were discussed including language on joint memberships and Director qualifications. Houtsma was appointed to the committee. The committee will meet again in March.

## N.W. ELECTRIC REPORT

Simmons and Newland reported on the February NW meeting. They reported on AECL, outages, deferred revenue, and lines and poles being replaced.

## APPOINT NW VOTING DELEGATE

Simmons was named voting delegate and Strobel will be the alternate.

## AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave the AMEC report from the February meeting. He gave updates on the EPA, AECL, CFC, the solar website, and provided a written member services report and written departmental reports

## LEGAL REPORT

Attorney Sheri Smiley gave the legal report for the month.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Newland presented the monthly Manager's Report. A board onboarding packet has been created. He reported he met with Toth on the construction work plan. He attended the Missouri Legislative Conference. The pole attachment contract with Lafayette County has been sent. The CFC strategic planning summary is being worked on. Board assessments will be sent out to be completed and brought back at the March meeting.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

None

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called at 11:45 a.m. and adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

## FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • January 2024

	This month	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,690,136</b>	<b>\$3,690,136</b>	<b>\$3,281,842</b>
Power Bill Expense	1,974,367	1,974,367	1,733,344
Operation & Maintenance Expense	597,304	597,304	529,687
Depreciation Expense	207,040	207,040	220,838
Interest Expense	137,833	137,833	130,093
<b>Total cost of Service</b> (Total Expense)	<b>2,916,544</b>	<b>2,916,544</b>	<b>2,613,962</b>
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	773,592	773,592	667,880
Other Margins	19,621	19,621	19,978
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$793,213</b>	<b>\$793,213</b>	<b>\$687,858</b>

