



# ElectricNews

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. ~ Serving our members' needs since 1939

## Investors concerned about EPA plan's effect on co-ops

### Strong co-op business practices seen as a plus for the future

The financial industry is keeping a close eye on how the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan will affect electric co-ops.

The plan, released last year, proposes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions largely by cutting back on the use of coal to generate electricity. And that, says one of the leading Wall Street investment rating firms, Standard & Poor's Rating Services, "could hit some electric cooperative utilities hardest: As the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association reported, these utilities rely on coal for an average of 70 percent of

their energy needs, compared with a national average for all utilities of less than 40 percent."

The emission reductions are scheduled to begin in the year 2022 and be complete by 2030. Those deadlines could be delayed by lawsuits that have been filed challenging the plan.

On the positive side, co-op leaders and the financial industry agree that cooperatives have shown good decision making that has put them in a strong

financial position. They have kept electric rates low but raised them when necessary, and they have taken advantage of the low interest rates of the past several years to lock in low rates for the future.

"From both a credit quality and management perspective, there's a lot of strength in the electric cooperative program—a huge asset in the current regulatory environment. We're positioned well for future stability."

—Sheldon Peterson  
CEO of Cooperative Finance Corporation

"From both a credit quality and management perspective, there's a lot of strength in the electric cooperative

program—a huge asset in the current regulatory environment. We're positioned well for future stability," says Sheldon Peterson, CEO of CFC, which

is short for the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. "Our business motivation is different. Our objectives are not to maximize the rate of return, our objectives are to minimize costs to the members – that's very positive for us and leads to competitiveness."

The S&P report observes, "We expect them to use similar methods to maintain their credit quality as the EPA finalizes regulations that could, in our view, significantly influence the cost of providing electric service—and we'll be watching to gauge their success."

\*Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

## Co-ops face strict federal robo-calling requirements

At West Central Electric Cooperative, maintaining good communication with you, our member, is top priority. Advancements in technology offer more options for keeping lines of communication open, but many businesses are

required to operate within the boundaries set by law and regulation – such as those issued by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). In particular, FCC regulations control the use of auto-dialed and prerecorded calls –

sometimes called "robo-calls" – sent to land lines and cell phones.

The steps WCE must take to comply with FCC requirements stem from the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, which was designed to help con-

sumers avoid unwanted telephone solicitations. Over the years, the FCC has made it clear that this law also applies to robo-calls and texts sent to wireless devices. The bottom line: WCE

Continued on page 2

*WCE is looking for a few good leaders?  
Are YOU one of them?*



**2015 YOUTH TOUR TO WASHINGTON, D.C.** ... WCE Youth Tour delegates (l-r) Daphanie Parks, Kylie Limback and Britnee Morris visit the United States Capitol Building during their trip to Washington D.C. for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour. Would you like to be a part of a life-changing experience? **Find out how on page 3.**

## There is a reason we say 'member' not 'customer'

Cooperatives really are not-for-profit and proudly serve the members who own us

When you purchase electricity from your local electric cooperative, how do you view yourself? Do you think of yourself as just another customer, or do you think of yourself as a member of an organization that is looking out for you and your family?

Although you purchase your power from our business, you are dealing with just one of several different types of businesses. You are dealing with a cooperative which views you a bit differently than the others.

For one, we are not-for-profit. At the

end of each year, any profits that are left over above the cost of operating your cooperative go into a fund to be 100 percent returned to you in the form of capital credits. Your board of directors looks at the financial state of the cooperative and determines what percentage of those profits to return at a given time.

And, speaking of the board of directors, they are one of you -- a member-owner just like you who decided they wanted to get involved in running their business. And to top it off, you put them there. Each year when you, as a cooperative member-owner attend your annual meeting, you vote on the directors you want to serve you.

Being a member of an electric cooperative is a pretty sweet deal. In addition to the not-for-profit status and being run by our member-owners, we are also

Continued on page 4



**Headquarters:**

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452  
Higginsville, MO 64037  
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803

**District office:**

506 N. Broadway  
Oak Grove, MO 64075

**PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349**

**Website:**

[www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop)

**24-Hour Number:**

1-800-491-3803

**General Manager:**

Mike Gray

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

**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

# Be prepared for winter storms: Stay warm, stay fed, stay safe

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. WCE cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

• **STAY WARM**— Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

• **STAY FED**— The CDC recommends having several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy.



Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

• **STAY SAFE**— When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel

alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to the cooperative at 800-491-3803, 816-565-4942 or online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop).

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. WCE is ready for what Mother

Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more winter safety tips, visit [www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather)].

*Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

## Co-ops face strict federal robo-calling requirements

**From page 1**

may use robo-calls/texts to communicate with members if the requisite consent was given prior to placing the call or text, or if there is an "emergency purpose."

This gets tricky when a co-op member discontinues use of a cell phone number that is subsequently assigned to a non-member. How does a caller determine that a number has been reassigned? We could face possible violations of \$500 per violation, or \$1,500 if the violation is found to be willful. The FCC may issue penalties of \$16,000 for each violation.

So how do the FCC requirements affect you as a co-op member? Important notifications that we use to communicate with you, such as past due reminders and disconnect notices, could be considered violations.

WCE is working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) on this issue, and comments

have been submitted to the FCC. Still pending before the Commission is a petition by the Edison Electric Institute and American Gas Association arguing that by simply providing a utility a phone number constitutes consent to receive non-telemarketing service-related calls.

We understand the importance of our members being able to receive information from the co-op., and it is our hope that the FCC will issue a new order addressing these issues soon. We will keep you updated on this important issue, but in the meantime, let's keep the lines of communication open. Stop by our office, call or email us, and make sure we have your current contact information on file.

*Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

### Statement of Nondiscrimination

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefit of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Mike Gray, general manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

*\*West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



## West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

The Touchstone Energy® logo signifies that a local electric cooperative is among the hundreds of consumer-owned co-ops which have joined in a nationwide marketing alliance dedicated to providing superior service at affordable rates to all customers, large and small, and the communities they



You could be here in 2016!

# WCE is looking for the next generation of leaders

What do the schools in West Central Electric Cooperative's service area have in common? They have sent some of the best and brightest to both our nation's and state's capitals for the Rural Electric Youth Tour and the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience. If you are a high school junior this year, YOU could be a part of that, too!

## What is Youth Tour?

The annual contest for high school juniors is sponsored by West Central Electric Cooperative, which sends delegates on a six-day trip to Washington, D.C. to learn about our nation's history and government while experiencing our nation's capital firsthand.

Electric Cooperatives throughout the country sponsor delegates on the trip which includes students from more than 40 states. Cooperatives from the state of Missouri will send approximately 80 delegates. This year, WCE will send **AT LEAST THREE DELEGATES**, and, depending on the number of entries received, as many as five delegates to Washington, D.C.

## When is it?

This year's Youth Tour will be June 10-16, 2016 Missouri delegates will meet in Jefferson City on Friday, June 10 for a banquet and orientation before traveling by plane to Washington, D.C. June 11. Delegates and their families will also have the opportunity to partici-

pate in Family Capital Day sponsored by West Central Electric.

## What will we do?

While in Washington, D.C., delegates will have the opportunity to meet with their senators and representatives, as well as visit historic memorials such as the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Iwo Jima and Vietnam memorials. Favorite Washington, D.C. landmarks are also on the agenda, including Mt. Vernon, the Smithsonian museums, Ford's Theatre, the Washington Monument and the Washington Cathedral. Delegates

will also enjoy a moonlight cruise on the Potomac River and a MLB game or play at the Kennedy Center.

The Rural Electric Youth Tour provides a chance for high school juniors to learn about government, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives, as well as rural electrification and the impact it has had on our nation's development.

## What is CYCLE?

CYCLE is the Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience which will be held July 20-22, 2016 in Jefferson City.

WCE will send **FIVE DELEGATES**

to this conference sponsored by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. They will join approximately 100 other delegates from across the state.

Students will hear amazing speakers, participate in team-building and leadership activities, and get a chance to debate their own bill on the floor of the Missouri House of Representatives.

For more information, contact your high school English teacher, FFA advisor, or Heather Hoflander at West Central Electric Cooperative in Higginsville at 1-800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.



WCE CYCLE delegate Kenzie Phillips works with her team to construct an electrical distribution system during the "Build a Cooperative" game at the 2015 Cooperative Youth Conference and Leadership Experience in Jefferson City.



Adrienne Cornelius of Higginsville, (far right) a scheduler for Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler, gives the Missouri delegation, which includes students from her home district, a tour of the U.S. Capitol Building.



Above: Kimber LaGore (left) and Courtney Bishop, CYCLE delegates from Santa Fe High School, sit on the floor of the Missouri State House of Representatives in preparation for a bill debate.



Left: WCE Youth Tour delegate Kylie Limback (second from right) and some of her fellow Missouri delegates arrive at the airport ready and excited for the 2015 Rural Electric Youth Tour to begin.

## Contest Details:

The contest is open to high school juniors who attend a school in the West Central Electric service area, or whose parents or legal guardians are current members of WCE.

## How do I enter?

Submit a 600-word, typed essay on ONE the following topics:

"Providing reliable, affordable electricity and taking care of the environment -- Can we do both?"  
**OR**

"Energy efficiency -- How can we make a difference?"

Students will use theme to write an essay showing the value of being a member of a rural electric cooperative.

## For more information:

Visit [westcentralelectric.coop](http://westcentralelectric.coop) and click on "Youth Programs" then "Youth Tour" to download the information packet.



# From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held October 29, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following Directors were present: Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Densil Allen, Robert Simmons, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and Administrative Assistant Kim Lewis.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved with the addition of a review of auditor proposals.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The unapproved minutes of the regular meeting of the board of directors held September 24, 2015, were approved.

### REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES FOR SEPTEMBER

An itemized list of expenditures for September was presented to the board, and the payment of the bills was ratified.

### APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following September 2015 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report; the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report and the Safety Report, which included no lost time accidents during the month.

### MEMBERSHIPS

The applications submitted for membership in the cooperative were accepted and approved. Directors reviewed a list of requests for termination of membership in the cooperative which, along with their requests that their billings be deducted from their deposits and the remainder, if any, be refunded to them, were accepted and approved.

### RESOLUTION REINSTATING 125 PLAN FOR 2016

Directors passed a resolution approving the 125 Plan for 2016.

### AMEC ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Strobel and Jarman reported their attendance and shared highlights from the meeting. Bredehoeft reported that former director Jack Rhodes was recognized for his 30 years of service on the WCE board. He also reported on the recent AMEC Board meeting. The NRECA International Program was discussed and the board decided that our linemen may participate with the time being split one-half vacation, one-half regular paid time by the cooperative.

### NRECA REGION 8-10 MEETING REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported their attendance at the Region 8-10 meeting and shared information and updates from the meeting, including resolutions and legislation regarding the Clean Power Plan.

### SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Simmons reported that requirements were reviewed with a possible penalty if transcripts are not included with the scholarship application.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Mike Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month which included information on changing the member drop location in Holden from F&C Bank to Cental Bank. Cooperative Building Solutions met wiht management at the headquarters and Oak Grove locaitons with the next meeting scheduled for Nov. 10. CBS will present their findings at the board retreat in January. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet Monday, Nov. 2 to finalize the plan. Annual meeting voting methods will be discussed at the November board meeting with legal counsel.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

### NEW BUSINESS

Discussions included whether legal counsel should attend board meetings, and will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

### MEETING ADJOURNED

FINANCIAL REPORT • <i>Statement of Operations</i> • September 2015			
	This month	YTD 2015	YTD 2014
Revenue	2,110,666	17,487,683	18,137,940
Power Bill Expense	1,370,463	11,017,208	10,791,466
Opertion & Maint. Expense	245,818	4,075,873	3,823,354
Depreciation Expense	161,278	1,270,234	1,216,911
Interest Expense	157,569	766,672	898,722
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,935,128	17,129,987	16,730,453
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(144,549)	357,696	1,407,486
Other Margins	5,236	107,644	86,129
TOTAL MARGINS	(139,313)	465,340	1,493,615

# To report an outage...

### Online:

Members may report power outages online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop). Click on the tab at the top titled "Report an Outage" and enter your account number or phone number.

### By phone:

You may also call to report outages by phone. Call 1-800-491-3803 -- 24 hrs. a day, or Higginsville at 816-565-4942.

**\*During heavy outages, we will be busy, so please keep trying if you get a busy signal.**

### Before calling, have you:

- 1) Checked your fuses or multibreakers?
- 2) Checked with your neighbors to see if they are out of electricity?

### When calling, have this information ready:

- A) Your name, or the name your service is under;
  - B) Your account number (Look on your latest bill to find it.) or your map location number.
- (This is the number the co-op uses to locate where you live. It was given to you when you signed up for membership.) Please keep both numbers by your phone for quicker service.

### Tracking Outages

Outage information may be tracked on our website, and periodic updates will be posted on our facebook page. **PLEASE DO NOT REPORT OUTAGES ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE** as they have a good chance of getting missed. If you have internet service, go to the website to report instead.

# There is a reason we say 'member' not 'customer'

### From page 1

part of a larger cooperative network which can provide assistance in the event of a natural disaster. It is called "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," and it is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles.

We are a member of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives which assists with local training and legislative issues affecting us in Jefferson City. We are a member of NW Electric Power Cooperative, which is the organization that produces the power that we buy at the wholesale level and enables us to provide safe, reliable and efficient power to you at the lowest possible cost. We hold a seat on the organization's board of directors to represent your interests.

WCE is also a member of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that unites electric cooperatives in the 47 states we serve. NRECA provides important benefits such as representing our interests with federal lawmakers and the administration. Member-owners like you have a role to play in all of these areas, but it is participation (member engagement) that is critically important. We strive to have members actively participate in our governance through voting or running for our board of directors.

Back in the early days of "REA" we never could have existed without the active participation of all of our members. While technology and reliability have improved, we still need you to be involved. In many ways, it is more important than ever that you feel like you belong to our co-op.

Margaret Mead the cultural anthropologist once said, "Never doubt the ability of a small group of people to change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has." West Central Electric is connected to a world full of people who believe in the cooperative principles and values, and we need you to be connected to us by more than just the electric line. So, get involved. Come to our annual meeting in August, and make your voice heard. Together, we can make Co-op Nation stronger than ever.