



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central Electric Cooperative

April 2017

ElectricNews

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



OAK GROVE TORNADO...A lineman's view of damage in the Oak Grove area shows a disaster zone after an F3 tornado tore through the area Monday night, March 7. The storm toppled nearly 40 poles and left more than 3,000 without power. The hardest hit areas were Oak Grove and Bates City. Most members were back on within 24 hours, but a few remained out for nearly two days.

WCE mourns loss of ROW Coordinator Steve "Stevie" Long

On Feb. 17, 2017, West Central Electric Cooperative employees were saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Right-of-Way Coordinator Steve Long, 53.

Steve began his career at West Central on Aug. 2, 1993 as a laborer. In just over a month, he was promoted to Groundman, 1st year, and in September 1995, he made Groundman 2nd year.

On Feb. 9, 1997, he moved into a first-year apprentice lineman position. On Feb. 1, 1999, he became the cooperative's staking technician, which he remained for more than four years.

Following the worst ice storm in cooperative history in 2002, it was apparent that an aggressive right-of-way program was needed. On June 1, 2003, Steve was named right-of-way coordinator, a position he held for the rest of his cooperative career.

Steve will be greatly missed by his two sons Colby (Lacey) Long and grandson Sawyer; Cabot Long, a lineman at Howard Electric Cooperative in Fayette, Mo.; special friend, Katie Robertson; his



Steve Long

mother, Susie Long; his father, Donald Long Jr.; a brother, Jimmy Long; a sister, Debbie Long, and many other relatives, friends and co-workers.

Electric cooperatives' policy priorities

As a member of West Central Electric Cooperative, you know that providing you with safe, affordable and reliable electricity is our top priority 365 days a year. Our employees are dedicated to this mission, whether they work on a line crew or spend most of their time behind a desk. But it might surprise you to know just how much the work we perform in the communities we serve can be greatly affected by what lawmakers and regulators are doing in Washington, D.C. That's why co-ops all across the country join together in making sure our leaders in Washington know what's important to co-ops and their members.

We do this, in part, through our membership in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization that represents the interests of the nation's more than 900 electric cooperatives on Capitol Hill and before federal agencies.

Here are some of the policy priorities for NRECA and America's electric co-ops in the next couple of years.

Strengthening rural America

Electric cooperatives built and improved the infrastructure to bring electricity to people living in rural America who were being left in the dark and left behind. Today, co-ops provide power to 42 million Americans in 47 states. We know that growing a vibrant rural economy is essential to America's success and prosperity, and we count on the federal government to help. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has long been a partner in helping co-ops fund a wide variety of activities, including electric infrastructure improvements and expansion of rural economic opportunities. Co-ops will work to further strengthen our relationship with the USDA in 2017 and beyond.

Co-ops also are keenly aware that tens

of millions of rural Americans continue to live without access to high-speed internet service. Bridging the digital divide continues to be a critical economic development issue for rural America, and it's a big priority for co-ops in Washington this year. And a little farther down the road, in 2018, the U.S. Congress is scheduled to produce a new Farm Bill. Co-ops will track this closely to ensure that updates of our nation's agricultural and rural policies also strengthen rural America.

Avoiding regulatory overreach

Electric cooperatives strongly advocate for public policies that are driven by consumers' interests and needs—not a "Washington knows best" mentality. Overreaching federal regulations have a significant negative impact on rural America, so co-ops are asking Washington policymakers to revisit a number of federal rules that have hurt rural commu-

nities and threatened co-ops' mission to provide affordable and reliable electricity.

We're also looking ahead to future rules and actions under major environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Air Act, to ensure that they carefully balance the nation's environmental and economic goals without imposing undue burdens on rural America.

Improving infrastructure

One of the themes that ran through last year's presidential campaign is the need to improve the nation's infrastructure. Electric co-ops have been in the infrastructure development and improvement business for decades and hope to work with leaders in Washington to continue this important progress.

Co-ops continuously improve the cyber and physical security of our systems

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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

Electric co-ops' major policy priorities

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and have been leaders in developing and using smart grid technologies. Here again, a strong public-private partnership remains essential, particularly in the area of cyber security. Electric cooperatives

also support a wide range of research activities to help improve our nation's future energy infrastructure. The U.S. Department of Energy and other agencies remain key partners in advancing this research, as well.

These are just a handful of examples of co-ops' major policy priorities over the next couple of years. It is by no means an exhaustive list. But hopefully it demonstrates that America's electric cooperatives are working just as hard in Washington as we are here at home to keep the electricity flowing and improve the quality of life for our members.

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.



2017 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE...WCE Member Services Manager Steve Moore (left) and Branch Manager Brent Schlotzhauer (right) visit with District 54 State Representative Dan Houx (center) during the 2017 AMEC Legislative Conference. During the conference, cooperative managers and personnel were able to visit with legislators and discuss issues and current legislation that are important to the cooperatives and their members, and keeping electricity safe, reliable and affordable.

West Central allocates capital credits for 2016

West Central Electric Cooperative's margins have been allocated to each member/owner who purchased electric energy in 2016, according to General Manager Mike Gray.

Because rural electric cooperatives' business structure differs from investor-owned utility companies, the money WCE makes as margins (profits) is returned to the member/owners who use the service, rather than to unknown investors. The money is used as equity in the cooperative, and is returned to the members over time as determined by your board of directors.

West Central Electric tries to balance the system by staying financially strong while also returning the profits to its members over time. Each year, the board of directors decides how this will be accomplished.

You can calculate your own allocation for the year by using the formula in the box below.

The percentage used in the formula was determined by the total margins (profits) of the cooperative, and the total cost paid for our wholesale power in 2016. This year, your allocated amount for 2016 appeared on the bill you received in March.

If you have a non-rural/residential account, any questions regarding how to calculate your allocation, or if you do not know your year-to-date patronage, contact Sandy Starke at the Higginsville office at 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803.

Total paid for electricity in 2016
(Beginning with the amount due Feb. 15, 2016,
and ending with the amount due Jan. 15, 2016.)

0.0652764889

2016 allocation

(Applies to rural/residential rate only.)

Example:

\$1,000 total billing for 2016

\$1,000

X

0.0652764889 =

\$65.27

2016 allocation

Linemen Appreciation Day April 10, 2017

#ThankALineman...For as long as there has been electricity flowing to homes and businesses, there have been linemen away from their homes, working in the harshest of elements to get the power back on. April 10, 2017 is the day set aside this year to show our appreciation for linemen far and wide who put it all on the line to get the power back on to you. When not working on the power lines or building new services, WCE linemen like Pete Nelson (right) can be found doing numerous other tasks around the cooperative, like trimming a trees at our headquarters location.



Missouri's annual green tax holiday is April 19-25

Once again, Missouri's annual Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday will be held April 19-25. You can save on sales tax for qualifying ENERGY STAR-certified appliances in participating counties and cities.

The following items qualify for the retail tax exemption as long as they are ENERGY STAR certified. The first \$1,500 of the purchase price of each item is exempt from tax.

- Clothes washers and dryers

- Water heaters
- Dishwashers
- Air conditioners
- Furnaces
- Refrigerators
- Freezers

- Heat pump

Go to <http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales/taxholiday/green/> to find out if your city, county or tax district will participate in the holiday. You'll find answers to other questions about the holiday there as well.

NRECA Youth Leadership Council...

Bertz represents Missouri, WCE at national meeting

As thousands of cooperative managers and directors from across the nation gathered in San Diego for the annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, another group was also making preparations for the week -- the NRECA Youth Leadership Council.

YLC is made up of students from across the nation who were delegates on the previous year's Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Each state chooses one student from their delegation to serve in this position. From among Missouri's 103 delegates last summer, Alli Bertz, a senior at Odessa High School, was chosen. YLC representatives traveled back to Washington, D.C. later in the summer for a leadership workshop focusing on the electric cooperative industry, and then spent the last week of February

participating in the NRECA annual meeting. YLC Representatives were recognized on stage, and had a hands-on experience with virtually every facet of the meeting including the resolutions process and helping members communicate with their legislators.

Bertz said she has sincerely appreciated the opportunity to spend time in her YLC role and work with other youth leaders in the cooperative world.

"These are the people that hold my heart, fill me with joy, and inspire me in all things. It was an incredible week experiencing cooperatives at the national level, serving members, and connecting with youth from across the nation," she said. "I am forever grateful for the opportunities that West Central Electric and the NRECA has allowed me."

(Far right photo) Alli Bertz, center, carries the Missouri State Flag during the opening ceremonies of the NRECA Annual Meeting. (At right) The nation's YLC delegates visit Coronado on their trip to San Diego.



Spring into efficiency

Spring is such a good time to take on some do-it-yourself projects to tighten your house for summer heat. Or hire it done, if you're not a DIYer. Here are some projects to consider:

Strip and tape, caulk and insulate — Sealing cracks and openings to prevent outside air from leaking into your home makes sense year around. Look for air leaks around doors and windows — that could save as much as 30 percent on your energy bill. Once you've fixed the air leaks, insulate; it will reduce the work load on your air conditioner.

Here's insulation guidance from ENERGY STAR:

Zone 4 (Eastern Oklahoma and most of Missouri) — uninsulated attic, R38-R60; insulated attic, R38; walls, R5; floors, R25-R30

Zone 5 (Upper Missouri and southern Iowa) — uninsulated attic, R49-R60; insulated attic, R38-R49; walls, R5-R6; R25-R30

Repair screens and upgrade windows

Repair holes in screen windows and doors so you can enjoy those spring breezes. You might be surprised that you can buy affordable efficient windows. If you have single-pane windows to replace, you'll notice the difference the more efficient replacements make on your utility bill and general comfort. ENERGY STAR-certified windows can lower utility bills by up to 15 percent. Look for windows that have low-e coatings, argon gas fill, wood frames and insulated spacers. Develop a plan for replacing windows over several years.

Shade windows

If you have south- or west-facing windows that get a lot of direct sun hitting them, add an awning, drapes or protective film to shield those windows. Also plant trees, vines or shrubs to naturally shade windows over time. Insulated drapes are a good investment for summer and winter.

Shop for a programmable thermostat

Programmable thermostats can save up to about 10 percent a year on energy costs when used properly. Use one that can automatically turn off your cooling system when you're not home and turn your system on in time for you to arrive home to a cooled house.

Upgrade your air conditioner

Yes, this costs upfront money. But there may be incentives available and new, more efficient models may save as much as 50 percent on cooling bills over old systems. When shopping for a new unit, look for an energy-efficiency ratio of 10 or more and buy the smallest capacity unit you'll need. If your air conditioner is more than 12 years old, it's time to check out new models.

Upgrade your lights

Traditional incandescent bulbs are no longer available, unless you've stockpiled a supply. You will use up to 80

percent less energy for compact fluorescents or light-emitting diodes than for incandescent lights.

Install skylights

The Iowa Energy Center suggests installing a skylight, such as a solar tube or tubular skylights, that allows more natural light into your home. The tubes use optics to reflect light indirectly through the tube inside, replacing light that otherwise would require electricity.

Buy a ceiling fan

A fan will allow you to raise the thermostat by about 4 degrees without feeling the difference. For every degree change, you'll use about 4 percent less energy.

Seal the garage

Your attached garage may leak more conditioned air than any other part of your home. Add weatherstrips to the bottom of the garage door and the door into your house.

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held January 27, 2017

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, Richard Strobel, Jeremy Ahmann, Dale Jarman, Sandra Streit and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, general counsel Shawn Battagler and staff.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Dec. 22, 2016, expenditures for the month of December 2016; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following December 2016 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons, end-of-the-year financials and statistics, and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray presented the safety report.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft and Gray reported their attendance at the AMEC board meeting. Highlights included an AECl update, FEMA issues, weather forecasting information, legislative conference and Amendment 2 litigation.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported their attendance at the NW board meeting. Highlights included AECl update, financials, airplane costs, substation maintenance issues, tower replacement, renewable resources, fiber build, CEO compensation study and AECl teacher training.

PURPA

The board resolved to adopt the Resolution for PURPA Joint Implementation Plan.

2017 BUDGET

The board approved the 2017 budget as presented.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION TRAINING

The board discussed training held on sexual harassment and discrimination on Jan. 26, 2017.

POLICY REVIEW

The board reviewed policies and changes suggested by the Policy Committee.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included payment facilities changes in Warrensburg and member billing concern and adjustment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session

MEETING ADJOURNED

Following executive session, there being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • December 2016

	This month	YTD 2016	YTD 2015
Revenue	2,696,316	26,623,091	26,165,722
Power Bill Expense	1,655,144	16,621,520	16,285,078
Operation & Maint. Expense	348,524	2,809,681	2,909,045
Depreciation Expense	169,952	2,002,737	1,919,268
Interest Expense	120,246	1,223,947	1,195,535
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,293,866	22,657,885	22,308,926
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	108,802	732,967	747,922
Other Margins	751,883	947,970	999,033
TOTAL MARGINS	860,685	1,680,937	1,746,955

Vital thunderstorm safety tips from the American Red Cross

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.

If the thunder roars, go indoors!

The National Weather Service recommends staying indoors for at least 30 minutes after the last time you heard thunder.

- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
 - Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
 - If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
 - If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dug-outs and sheds are NOT safe.
- Source: American Red Cross

BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.

- WATER
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.
- TOOLS
Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at www.ready.gov



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.