



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central Electric Cooperative

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# ElectricNews

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

## Citizen lobbyists play key role in policymaking

### Electric co-op leaders keep national energy policy debates focused on consumer concerns

On a humid summer day in Washington, D.C., a group of electric cooperative employees and directors negotiate Capitol Hill, moments away from meeting with their U.S. representative. Despite a hectic schedule, you can bet the legislator will spare time for them. They know that close contact with voters back home is crucial to their role in Congress.

Legislators listen when those doing the talking are real people. They know they can trust a message delivered from the grassroots.

"Government doesn't quite work the way history books tell us," explains Barry Hart, CEO of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. "An array of lobbyists and special interest groups are constantly vying for policy-makers' attention, all pushing their way as the right way. Many times politics involves dealing with many points of view from totally committed people and reconciling them. It can be very brutal."

Efforts by electric co-op leaders like Hart keep national energy policy debates focused on consumer concerns. These efforts work with support from the tens of thousands of grassroots voices being heard on Capitol Hill as personal letters and emails sent by consumers reach lawmakers. Since electric co-ops

operate in a heavily regulated industry where public policy carries far-reaching impacts, consumer involvement is particularly important.

"There's no question that the plans currently being made by policy-makers could double and triple electricity rates and energy costs, easily, over the next decade or so," stresses Hart.

"Consumers are speaking up before that happens, supporting our own efforts as lobbyists. The role of these concerned consumers—these 'citizen lobbyists'—is key in shaping policy in the electric industry, where the role of government is very, very high."

The existence of electric cooperatives serves as a prime example. Launched in 1935 with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's creation of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), REA helped establish 417 electric cooperatives that were serving 288,000 households within four years. Today, 42 million Americans receive electricity from more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops.

Uncle Sam also played a direct role in getting power to rural residents through federal hydropower development projects, most of which were constructed between the 1930s and early 1960s.

Generation produced at federal dams continues to deliver steady, reliable, baseload renewable electricity that's sold to co-ops and publicly owned

municipal utilities through four federal power marketing administrations.

"Co-ops operate in an environment where a host of laws passed by Congress

and state legislatures, and regulations imposed by federal and state agencies, profoundly affect consumers," Hart comments. "Addressing these concerns takes on great importance."

Enter the lobbyist. The term "lobby" dates back to at least the 1600s as a place in the British House of Commons where citizens could meet with their representatives. Recognizing its importance, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution enshrined lobbying, along with freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to protest, as a basic American right.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association was formed to provide electric cooperatives with legislative representation on a national level. Most local electric co-ops also belong to a statewide association that handles lobbying functions at the state level.

"When consumers wake up in the morning, they're not thinking about whether Congress could be marking up an important measure that could impact their electric bills—people generally don't track things like that," says Hart, who works closely with the NRECA staff on legislative issues. "That's what lobbyists are for. However, our efforts are greatly supported by consumers, who can explain to elected officials what their core issues are. That's the essence of grassroots: It's a powerful, persuasive force that most special interest groups just don't have."

Electric co-op lobbying efforts have recently been reinforced by the Cooperative Action Network, an organized grassroots awareness campaign that puts co-op consumers directly in touch with U.S. senators and representatives. Over the past years, more than a million messages stressing the impact of regulations aimed at power generation from coal have been sent to the Environmental Protection Agency through the program. Of these, more than one-third came from Missouri electric cooperative members.

The glue that holds it all together are the very real, personal messages from co-op consumers being sent to regulators or legislators on Capitol Hill. These messages raise the co-op voice above the drumbeat of other special interest groups.

"Consumers give us credibility when we step into a congressional office," Hart concludes. "These grassroots contacts really put authenticity into what we're talking about."

**"Consumers give us credibility when we step into a congressional office. These grassroots contacts really put authenticity into what we're talking about."**

**—Barry Hart  
CEO of the Association of  
Missouri Electric Cooperatives**

**2016 YOUTH TOUR TO WASHINGTON, D.C. ...** WCE Youth Tour delegates (l-r) Alli Bertz, Abby Bertz and Chance Riddle 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.



## Is saving energy on your list of New Year's resolutions?

### No-cost energy-saving ideas for 2017

Take Control & Save at [www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx](http://www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx) has many excellent energy-saving tips. Here are 10 freebies:

- Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120 degrees
- Limit your shower to under 5-7 minutes
- Set the refrigerator temperature to 34-37 degrees and freezer to 0-5 degrees
- Only do full laundry and dishwasher loads
- Keep your outdoor heat pump/air conditioner unit clean
- Set your thermostat to 78 degrees in summer and 68 in winter

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**General Manager:**  
Mike Gray

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

**Board of Directors:**  
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Clark Bredehoeft, Vice-Pres.  
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Richard Strobel, Director  
Sandra Streit, Director  
Jeremy Ahmann, Director



**SPACE HEATER SAFETY...** Keep your space heater at least 3 ft. away from yourself and flammable items like blankets, drapes, and rugs. *Source: U.S. Fire Administration*

## Safe use of electric heating products add winter warmth

### Space heaters can keep you comfortable if used correctly

When used properly and safely, electric blankets and other heating devices can help keep you toasty during cold winter months. Here are a few safety tips for electric blankets and heating pads to keep in mind:

- Purchase items only if they have been approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Inspect all cords and connections for cracks and frayed edges, which are a huge fire and injury hazard. Replace blankets or heating pads with faulty cords.
- Discard your blanket or heating pad if you see dark or charred spots on the surface.
- Do not put another cover on top of an electric blanket unless the safety instructions included in the packaging specifically state it's safe to do so. Some newer models protect against overheating.
- Once your electric blanket or heating pad is switched on, keep it laid flat—a folded device can cause a fire, as can a blanket that's been tucked in (which can bend wires).
- Never use heated bedding while asleep—look for a model with a timer

that switches off automatically.

#### Space Heaters

If you choose to use a space heater to supplement your home's heating system, some of the same rules of thumb apply, including purchasing a safety-certified model and reading the included safety instructions. More tips for space heaters:

- Keep units 3 ft. away from combustible materials—such as bedding, drapes, clothes, and rugs. Space heaters also have parts that can spark, so avoid using them in areas where you store flammable liquids like kerosene and gasoline.
- In general, plugging space heaters directly into a wall outlet is best. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it's the correct type and boasts the right wire gauge size for your particular space heater. Otherwise, use a wall socket that can handle the load.
- Check safety instructions before using a space heater around water—some models are not intended for use in bathrooms.
- Be sure children are supervised around space heaters. Curious exploration can lead to electrical shock and burns.
- Finally, unplug and store the space heater in a safe place when you're not using it.

*Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*

## Is saving energy on your list of New Year's resolutions?

#### From page 1

- Close fireplace dampers when not burning a fire
- Make sure vents are not blocked by furniture or drapes
- Wash clothes in cold water
- Use air-dry cycle on the dishwasher rather than heat-dry

#### Low-cost energy-saving ideas for 2017

Take Control & Save at [www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx](http://www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx) has many excellent low-cost energy-saving tips. Here are 10 tips:

- Caulk around windows, doors and baseboards
- Replace furnace filter as the manufacturer recommends
- Place motion sensors on lights
- Install switch and outlet gaskets/foam inserts on outer walls
- Weatherstrip doors and windows
- Caulk electrical wire penetrations at top of interior walls
- Install foam pipe wrap around hot water pipes
- Replace shower head with low-flow model
- Use a smart power strip for electronics
- Add water heater blanket if manufacturer's warranty allows

#### Long-term energy-saving ideas for 2017

Take Control & Save at [www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx](http://www.takecontrolandsave.coop/Tips.aspx) has many excellent long-term energy-saving tips. Here are five for starters:

- Get an energy audit and implement the recommendations
- Replace inefficient heating/cooling equipment
- Add insulation in attic
- Replace older water heater with energy-efficient model

### 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 2017!

# 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 9-15, 2017 Missouri delegates will meet in Jefferson City on Friday, June 9 for a banquet and orientation before traveling by plane to Washington, D.C. June 10. 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 12-14 2017 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.

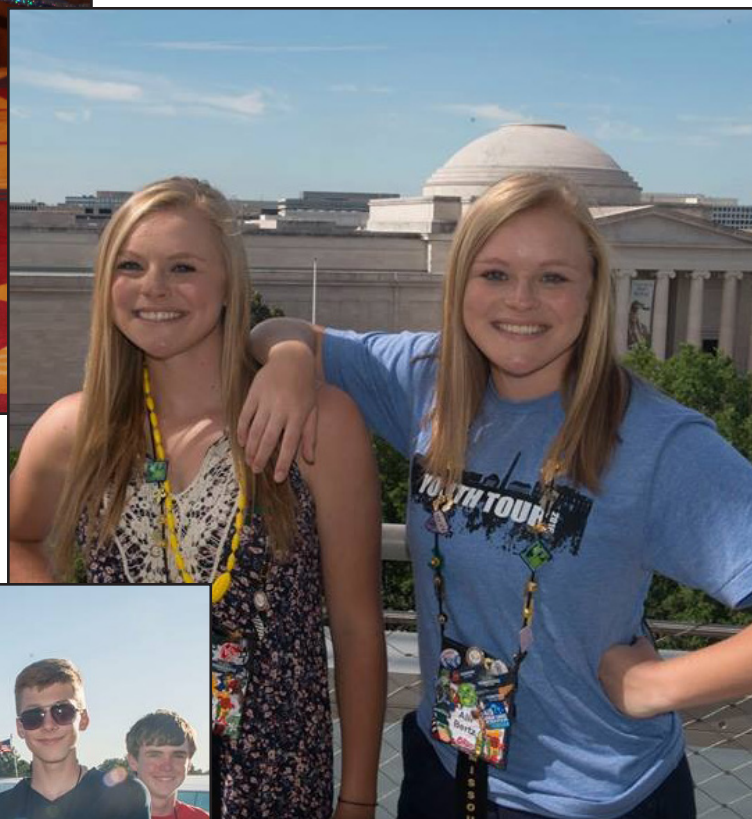
For more information, contact your high school English teacher, FFA advisor, or Heather Hoflander at West Central Electric Cooperative in Higginsville at 1-800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.



Team building activities are just a part of the amazing CYCLE experience. (Above) WCE delegate Katie Haston anchors her team in an activity during the conference.



You never know what you might get yourself into at CYCLE. Yes! There is a SPAM-carving contest, as WCE delegate Tiffany Pence prepares to demonstrate.



Above: Youth Tour delegates Abby Bertz and Alli Bertz visit the Newseum in Washington, D.C.



Left: WCE Youth Tour delegate Chance Riddle (far left) and a few new friends enjoy a cruise on the Potomac River during an evening cruise to see the sights of Washington, D.C.

## 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 the following topic:

**"Electric Cooperatives --  
Doing their part to make the  
world a better place"**

Students will use theme to write an essay exploring various ways electric cooperatives work for their members as well as in their local communities and beyond to make the world a better place.

## 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 27, 2016

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: Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and General Counsel Shawn Battagler.

**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 Sept. 22, 2016; expenditures for the month of September 2016; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

**APPROVAL OF REPORTS**

The following September 2016 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; the monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report and the Safety Report.

**NRECA REGION 8-10 MEETING REPORT**

Board members reported on their attendance at the NRECA Region 8-10 meeting and the information they received.

**AMEC REPORT**

Bredehoeft reported his attendance and highlights of the meeting including dues increase, Federated update, international program, MECIP rates, NORANDA facility discussion and board training.

**AMECPAC CONTRIBUTION FOR 2017**

The board approved a \$500 donation to AMECPAC

**NW ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT**

Gray and Swisegood reported on their attendance and shared highlights, including budget, PURPA, storms, Platte-Clay solar output, wind production, compensation consultant, cost-of-service study and rate structure change.

**PURPA RESOLUTION**

Following an explanation, the board approved a resolution to enter into a joint plan for meeting obligations imposed on WCE under PURPA and FERC's Regulations with NW Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. and Associated Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.

**AECI ELECTRIC LOAD FORECAST**

The board voted to accept the 2016 Electric Load Forecast.

**RETIREMENT SECURITY PLAN**

Gray presented information on a proposed amendment to the cooperative's retirement security plan with was approved by the board.

**BOARD RETREAT LOCATION**

The board approved moving the retreat location to the Courtyard by Marriot. Gray asked board members to recommend topics for discussion at the retreat.

**ORGANIZTIONAL CHART**

Gray discussed the current organizational chart and his expectations regarding needed changes in the future.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

Manager Mike Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month which included information on building renovation, NRECA pension legislation, real estate discussions and employee appreciation banquet plans.

**LEGAL FEES**

The board resolved to adopt a discounted legal fee agreement as proposed.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The chairman called for new business:

**NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING**

The board voted to move the November board meeting to Monday, Nov. 21, 2016.

**MEMBER CONCERN**

Gray discussed an issue regarding a member's bill adjustment.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

**FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • September 2015**

	This month	YTD 2016	YTD 2015
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2,390,251</b>	<b>20,181,510</b>	<b>19,508,630</b>
Power Bill Expense	1,340,989	12,490,720	12,333,476
Opertion & Maint. Expense	263,304	2,048,050	2,193,664
Depreciation Expense	168,426	1,494,579	1,431,849
Interest Expense	88,508	886,675	926,455
<b>Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)</b>	<b>1,861,227</b>	<b>16,920,024</b>	<b>16,885,444</b>
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	266,584	868,582	274,440
Other Margins	63,152	178,998	135,576
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>329,736</b>	<b>1,047,580</b>	<b>410,016</b>

## \*\*PAYMENT LOCATION CLOSING\*\*

Beginning Jan. 1, Central Bank of Warrensburg will close it's branch office at 1310 S. Maguire, therefore West Central Electric will no longer have a payment site in Warrensburg. However, members may make payments in a variety of other convenient ways:

Online:

Members may pay online via the SmartHub on our website at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop). You may use a checking or savings account, or a debit or credit card.

By phone:

You may also call the secure, dedicated payment line at 855-874-5349. You may use a checking or savings account, or a debit or credit card.

Payment Drop:

Payment drop boxes will continue to be available at both WCE offices in Higginsville and Oak Grove, as well as a payment drop site at the F&C Bank in Holden.

By Mail:

Members are always welcome to send in payments by mail.

In Person:

Members can make payments in person at either of our offices in Oak Grove or Higginsville, Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## 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.