



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central Electric Cooperative

RURAL
MISSOURI

July 2017

Electric News

Special Annual Meeting Issue!

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

Business Meeting begins at 7 p.m.

West Central Electric Cooperative's 78th Annual Meeting Aug. 4, 2017
UCM Multipurpose Building,
Warrensburg, MO.

5:00 p.m.

- ♦Registration begins. All registered members will receive a \$25 energy credit. Must be present to receive.
- ♦Join us for a fun, old-fashioned co-op barbecue of hamburgers, hot dogs, watermelon, chips and cookies, tea & lemonade! Meals will be served to the first 1,300 members and guests in attendance. Dinner music provided by Ben Nuelle.
- ♦Informational booths and displays open at east end of Multi.

6:50 p.m.

- ♦Hanna Stillwell, Youth Tour delegate to Washington, D.C.

7:00 p.m.

- ♦Business Meeting -- approval of minutes (*page 5 of this issue*), reports of business, election of directors (*profiles on page 3.*) and bylaw election (*proposed language on page 4.*)

Also...

- ♦Drawings for prizes, including a **32" Vizio E Series TV** donated by NW Electric and several \$25 and \$50 energy certificates
- ♦Drawing for grand-prize: **one month FREE electricity!** (*Residential account only, applies to the bill due in September*)
- ♦Drawings for kids' prizes including a **girl's bike** and a **boy's bike with helmets**
- ♦Kids' Safety Area with giveaways, safety demonstrations, and Rural Missouri's Buddy Bear -- Bring your camera to take pictures with Buddy!
- ♦Swimming for the kids 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Multipurpose Building indoor pool

Continued on page 5



Cooperatives are different

The cooperative way. It's a little different. We are a little different; and that's a good thing. It's something we are proud of.

Every day when we come to work, we know it's about more than just **connecting the meter**. It's **about connecting with our members**. Although we know it is important to keep you informed about things like electrical safety, how to use energy efficiently and the things happening in our industry that could affect your rates, we also think it is important to connect with you on a more personal level.

We love to see you at the annual meeting where we can visit face-to-face, and we host Member Appreciation Day at our offices in December. We hope you connect with us on Facebook where we can keep you informed on important topics like electrical safety and outage details as well as have some fun with member contests and letting you see what is happening around the cooperative.

We want to do more than just provide you with electricity. We want to connect you to the world by providing you with high-speed satellite internet ser-

vice. We want to make sure our future generations are successful and productive members of society. We can do that by providing your children with scholarships or a spot on the Rural Electric Youth Tour or CYCLE delegation. We want to help you use electricity more efficiently, so we not only provide you with information on how you can save money on your electric bill, but we also offer rebates on some energy-efficient equipment.

So, while we are working behind the scenes with our local, state and national leaders to make sure your electricity is safe, reliable and affordable, we want to make sure you know we are here for much more than to just keep the lights on.

RM mailing label

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

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

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETS...**

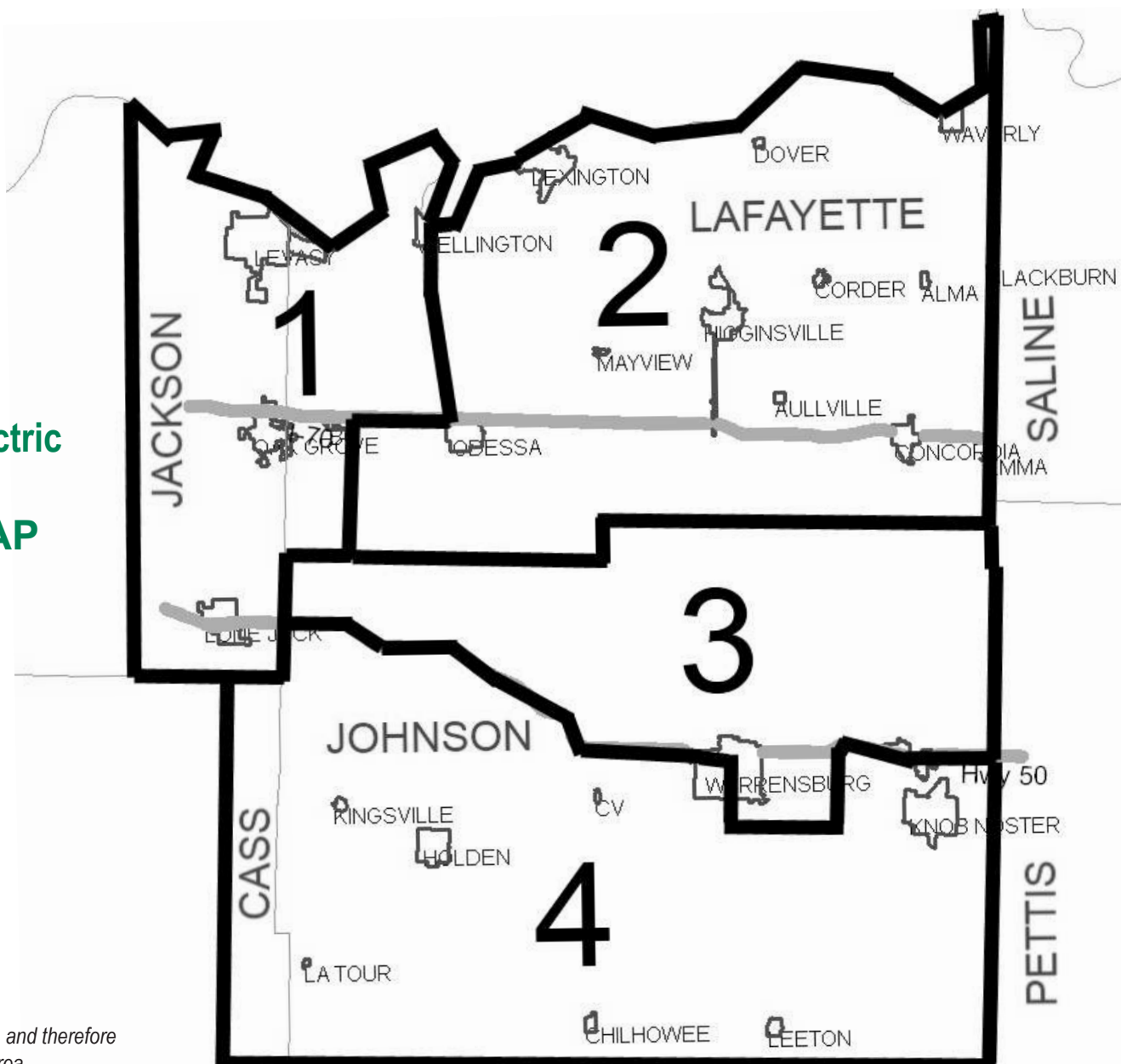
The West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee met in May to nominate candidates for the 2017 board of directors election. The committee consists of the following active WCE members: Front row (l-r): Tim Evert, Dennis Knipmeyer, Adam Heater and Verna Jenkins. Back row (l-r) Jeremy Sanders, Sarah Willard, Jerry Phoenix, Paul Nolte and Walter Hutcherson.

West Central Electric Cooperative DISTRICT MAP

LEGEND

County lines ———

District boundaries ———



**District 5 is an "At-Large" district, and therefore
encompasses the entire service area.*

West Central Electric Cooperative • 2017 Board of Directors Candidates

District 3



Robert Simmons
Warrensburg, Mo.

Occupation: Retired banker

Family: Wife, Georgia; daughters Rachel and Brooke.

Community groups and organizations, church, etc. to which you belong: Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, Missouri Valley Community Action Agency Treasurer, Archer Oddfellows Lodge in Higginsville, Mid-Missouri Tractor Club, Tri-County Foundation in Concordia, Veterans Assistance League

Why did you agree to run for re-election to the board of directors? I feel West Central Electric offers affordable electricity and excellent service. I feel the employees do an excellent job taking care of the members and keeping the lights on. It is a privilege to serve on the board of directors.

What are your goals for your next three-year term? Trying to keep the cost of electric service to the members as inexpensive as possible, and trying to develop more efficient ways for the cooperative to operate.

In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing electric cooperatives today, and how do you plan to address that issue? The biggest issue I feel facing cooperatives today is the regulations that are being imposed by the federal government that affect the cost of power to the consumer. I feel it is important to work together with other cooperatives to deal with this issue, as well as developing alternative power solutions.

Additional comments: I have enjoyed serving on the board of directors these past years, and would like to continue to do so.

District 3



Richard Strobel
Concordia, Mo.

Occupation: Farmer

Family: Wife, Linda; children Amanda, Christina & David; grandsons, Tyler, 13, and Tanner, 5; granddaughter, Olivia, 4.

Community groups and organizations, church, etc. to which you belong: Member of St. Paul Lutheran Church; 13-year member of Transportation Advisory Council which works with MoDot for future planning; Member of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, American Legion Post 258; Member and past commander of VFW Post 5649. One of my passions is my duty as commander of the Concordia Veterans Honor Guard through which we show honor to deceased veterans at their funerals and on national holidays. I have been the commander for the past 16 years, and one of the most gratifying experiences is to fold and present the flag to the grateful families and fire a 21-gun salute.

Why did you agree to run for re-election to the board of directors? I have very much enjoyed the last six years as a board member of WCE. Working for the membership to improve their service has given me a great deal of pride. There is still much work to do in the future with EPA regulations of generating power plants.

What are your goals for your next three-year term? I believe the board should continue to work together for the good of the entire membership. I intend to have as much input into decision-making as possible. I further believe the health and safety of our linemen should be our greatest concern. I have said before, our employees are our greatest asset. Our outside workers only number 19, yet after a storm many of you have witnessed their amazing success.

In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing electric cooperatives today, and how do you plan to address that issue? When I was elected to this board six years ago, I never heard the mass media talking about environmental regulations being imposed on coal-fired electric generating plants. Today's power plants are emitting very little or small amounts of emissions compared to the power plants of the past, and although we believe that these regulations may be scaled back, there is still an uncertainty, which is why we continue to monitor legislation. These issues can and are being dealt with by grassroots efforts.

Additional comments: I have always believed most members are happy if they turn on their light switch and the lights come on and stay on. Electricity is safe, affordable with rates under 10 cents per kilowatt, and reliable with brush removed from most all power lines.

District 5



Densil Allen, Jr.
Warrensburg, Mo.

Occupation: Currently own a commercial cow/calf operation

Family: Wife, Cyndi; son Shawn Allen and wife Bess, grandchildren Harper and Boone Allen; daughter Angie Allen Ruddock and husband Wade, grandchildren Reagan and Kate Ruddock; daughter Emma Allen.

Community groups and organizations, church, etc. to which you belong: Attend Windsor Assembly of God church; member of Missouri Cattlemen Association; board member of First Central Bank, Warrensburg; member of Advisory Board of Warrensburg FFA, 4-H project leader, member of the Johnson County Law Enforcement Restitution Board.

Why did you agree to run for re-election to the board of directors? I have enjoyed serving the members of West Central Electric for the past six years. I would like to use the knowledge I have gained by attending director workshops and conferences to help our cooperative better serve its members.

What are your goals for your next three-year term? To work with the other board members to provide our members of West Central Electric with a reliable and affordable source of electric power.

In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing electric cooperatives today, and how do you plan to address that issue? One of the biggest issues is the uncertainty of government regulations. It is important that we keep coal as one of our sources to generate electricity. While we do use alternative sources to supplement our power supply, we can't depend on these sources to supply our total needs. We must continue to monitor developments on changing regulations, and work to make sure government officials are aware of how changes could affect our power supply and our members. It is also important that we keep our members informed on these issues and how they could affect their cost of electricity.

Additional comments: I look forward to having the opportunity to continue serving the members of our cooperative.

MAIL-IN BALLOT PROCEDURES

Members who are unable to attend the 78th annual meeting on Friday, Aug. 4, may still participate in the board of directors election by mail-in ballot.

- You must submit a request for a voting packet either by calling the office and requesting a packet to be sent to you, or by mailing in the form that was included with your June bills.

- All requested ballots will be mailed to members after July 10, 2017.

- Once you receive your voting packet, you may cast your vote and follow the instructions to send the ballots to the cooperative's attorney.

- Marked ballots must arrive NO LATER THAN Aug. 3, 2017 at the cooperative attorney's office in order to have the votes included in the count.

- Members who are able to attend the meeting may still vote in person at the meeting and do not have to submit a mail-in ballot.

Questions regarding the mail-in voting procedures may be directed to Office Manager Sandy Starke at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Following is the bylaw article which allows voting by mail-in ballot:

Article III

Meetings of Members

Section 5. Voting

Each member shall be entitled to only one vote upon each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of the members. All questions shall be decided by a vote of a majority of the members voting thereon in person, in addition to those voting by any other lawful means established by resolution of the Board of Directors of the Cooperative at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of said meeting and specified in the notice of the meeting, except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these bylaws.

Section 6. Proxies

Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

● Proposed Bylaw Amendment ●

The Board of Directors recommends to the membership a revision to Article VII of the cooperative's bylaws. The section which contains the proposed change follows in this newsletter. Language proposed to be added is highlighted in **green color**. The following proposed change will appear on ballots to be voted on at the August 4, 2017 Annual Meeting of Members.

Article VII

Disposition of Revenues and Receipts

Section 1. Patronage Capital

The Cooperative shall at all times be operated on a Cooperative non-profit basis for the mutual benefit of its patrons. The Cooperative's operations shall be so conducted that all patrons, members and non-members alike, will through their patronage furnish capital for the Cooperative.

In order to induce patronage and to assure that the cooperative will operate on a non-profit basis the Cooperative is obligated to account on a patronage basis to all its patrons, members and non-members alike, for all amounts received from the furnishing of electric energy in excess of operating costs and expenses properly chargeable against the furnishing of electric energy. All such amounts in excess of operating costs and expenses at the moment of receipt by the Cooperative are received with the understanding that they are furnished by the patrons, members and non-members alike, as capital. The Cooperative is obligated to pay all such amounts in the excess of operating costs and expenses to the patrons by credits to a capital account for each patron. The books and records of the Cooperative shall be set up and kept in such a manner that at the end of each fiscal year the amount of capital, if any, so furnished by each patron is clearly reflected and credited in an appropriate record to the capital account of each patron, and within a reasonable time after the close of the fiscal year, the Cooperative shall notify (in such manner as the Board of Directors may determine) the patrons of the method of procedure by which the patron may determine the amount so credited to the patron's account. All such amounts credited to the capital account of any patron shall have the same status as though they had been paid to the patron in cash in pursuance of a legal obligation to do so and the patron had then furnished the Cooperative corresponding amounts for capital. All other amounts received during and after the calendar year 1964, by the Cooperative from its operations in excess of costs and expenses shall insofar as permitted by law be;

(a) Used to offset any losses incurred during the current or any prior fiscal year and

(b) To the extent not needed for that purpose, allocated to its patrons on a percentage basis and any amount so allocated shall be included as part of the capital credited to the accounts of patrons as herein provided.

In the event of dissolution or liquidation of the Cooperative, after all outstanding indebtedness of the Cooperative shall have been paid, outstanding capital credits shall be retired without priority on a pro rata basis before any payments are made on account of property rights to members. If at any time prior to dissolution or liquidation, the board of directors shall determine that the financial condition of the Cooperative will not be impaired thereby, the capital then credited to patrons' accounts may be

retired in full or in part.

The Board of Directors shall determine the method, basis, priority and order of retirement, if any, for all amounts heretofore and hereinafter furnished as capital. Capital credited to the account of each patron shall be assignable only on the books of the Cooperative pursuant to written instruction for the assignor and only to successors in interest or successors in occupancy in all or a part of such patron's premises served by the Cooperative unless the board of directors, acting under policies of general application, shall determine otherwise.

In the event that a non-member patron shall elect to become a member of the Cooperative, the capital credited to the account of such non-member patron may be applied by the Cooperative toward the payment of a membership fee on behalf of such non-member patron.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the bylaws, the board of directors, at its discretion, shall have the power at any time upon the death of any patron if the legal representatives of his estate shall request in writing that the capital credited to any such patron be retired prior to the time such capital would otherwise be retired under the provisions of these bylaws, to retire capital credited to any such patron immediately upon such terms and conditions as the board of directors, acting under policies of general application, and the legal representatives of such patron's estates shall agree upon. **In addition, the Board of Directors may annually retire, on a similar discounted present value basis, the capital credit accounts of members who have disconnected from the service lines of the Cooperative, with unpaid accounts of any type,** provided, however, that the financial condition of the Cooperative will not be impaired thereby.

Provided, however, that the Board of Directors shall have the power to adopt rules providing for the separate retirement of that portion (power supply portion or other portion), of capital credited to the accounts of patrons which corresponds to capital credited to the account of the Cooperative. Such rule shall

(a) establish a method for determining the power supply portion or other portion of capital credited to each patron for each applicable fiscal year,

(b) provide for separate identification on the Cooperative's books of the supply portion or other portion of capital credited to the Cooperative's patrons,

(c) provide for appropriate notification to patrons with respect to the power supply portion or other portion of capital credited to their accounts and

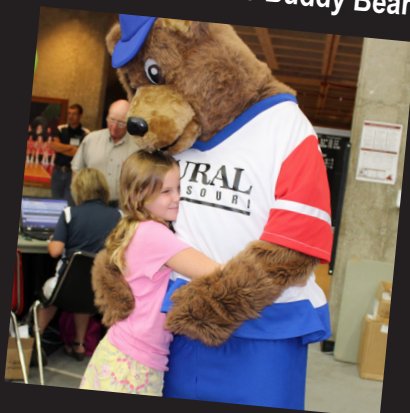
(d) preclude a general retirement to patrons for any fiscal year prior to the general retirement of other capital credited to patrons for the same year or of any capital credited to patrons for any prior fiscal year.

There is something for everyone at the WCE annual meeting! Come join us Friday, Aug. 4!



Register to win prizes like bikes for the kids and free electricity for the parents!

Meet and take your photo with Rural Missouri's Buddy Bear!



Take part in your cooperative's democratic process by voting on directors and bylaws!

Dinner music provided by Mr. Ben Nuelle!



AND LOTS MORE!!

West Central Electric Cooperative's 78th Annual Meeting August 4, 2017

UCM Multipurpose Building, Warrensburg, MO.

From page 1

- ♦Health screenings from Johnson County Community Health Services
- ♦Meet the WCE linemen and learn more about what they do.
- ♦Glaucoma & macular degeneration screenings by the Missouri Lions Foundation
- ♦West Central Services booth -- where you can get more information about the Exede satellite service provided by your electric coopera-

tive

- ♦Take Control and Save booth. This cooperative energy-efficiency program can show you how to make the most of your energy dollars by taking control of your electricity use.
 - ♦Sign up for SmartHub online payments and online outage information
- See you Aug. 4 in Warrensburg!

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting of Members, August 5, 2016

To be approved at August 4, 2017 Annual Meeting of Members

The 77th Annual Meeting of Members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "Cooperative"), was held at the Multipurpose Building on the campus of the University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, Johnson County, State of Missouri, on Friday, August 5, 2016, pursuant to the bylaws of the Cooperative and notice to membership.

Registration began at 5:00 p.m. and a meal was served. Musical entertainment was provided by Dave Rest.

BUSINESS MEETING

The business session was called to order by Densil Allen, Jr., President of the Cooperative, at 7:00 pm. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept.

Youth Tour Representative Alli Bertz led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance. Emma Allen sang the National Anthem. A prayer of invocation was offered by Director Richard Strobel.

President Allen introduced special guests in attendance at the meeting and the Board of Directors.

The President called on Attorney Shawn Battagler to verify the presence of a quorum. Mr. Battagler reported that the quorum formula required the presence of 140 members and that 681 members were registered at 6:30 p.m. It was therefore ordered that a quorum was established for the transaction of business.

Mr. Battagler presented the Agenda of the meeting. On motion made, seconded and passed, the Agenda was adopted as printed.

Secretary Simmons presented the Notice of Meeting and Proof of Mailing. On motion made, seconded and passed, the membership resolved to waive the reading of the Notice of Meeting and Proof of Mailing. He referred attention to the Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting printed in the July issue of West Central Electric News with the Notice of Meeting. On motion made, seconded and passed, the membership resolved to approve the 2015 Annual Meeting minutes as printed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Allen presented the President's Report recounting the business and activities of the Cooperative since the last annual meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Dale Jarman presented Treasurer's Report. He directed attention

to the financial information contained in the meeting program that was drawn from the audited records of the Cooperative. On motion made, seconded and passed, the membership resolved to approve the Treasurer's Report.

DIRECTOR ELECTION

President Allen called on Walter Hutcherson to present the report of the director Nominating Committee. Mr. Hutcherson affirmed that the committee nominated Max Swisegood in District 1; Stan Rhodes from District 2; and Sandra Streit and Darlene Buckstead from District 4.

Mr. Battagler conducted the election of Directors. He noted that there were no nominations received by petition. Mr. Battagler noted that since there was a single candidate for Districts 1 and 2, it was appropriate to elect Mr. Swisegood and Mr. Rhodes by motion. On motion made, seconded and passed, the membership resolved to elect Max Swisegood for District 1 and Stan Rhodes for District 2. Each nominee from District 4 was allowed the opportunity to make brief remarks to the membership. The membership was given instructions regarding marking their ballot choices for District 4.

The members appointed as election judges were called to collect and count director election ballots.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Mike Gray presented the Manager's Report updating the membership on operations, maintenance, finances, new EPA regulations, and solar energy. He also reminded the membership of the many convenient ways to conduct their business with the Cooperative

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Battagler asked for any unfinished or new business. There was none. Steve Moore and employees conducted the drawing and distribution of attendance prizes. On motion made, seconded and passed, the membership meeting was adjourned.

ELECTION RESULTS

Following adjournment, Mr. Battagler returned to the podium to report the election results as follows: Director election District 4: Sandra Streit – 394 votes; Darlene Buckstead – 187 votes. It was therefore declared that by motion and election Sandra Streit, Stan Rhodes, and Max Swisegood were each elected for a term of 3 years until their successors are elected and qualified.

2017 Official Notice of Annual Meeting

The 2017 Annual Meeting of members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held: Friday, August 4, 2017 on the campus of the University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg

The meeting will feature:

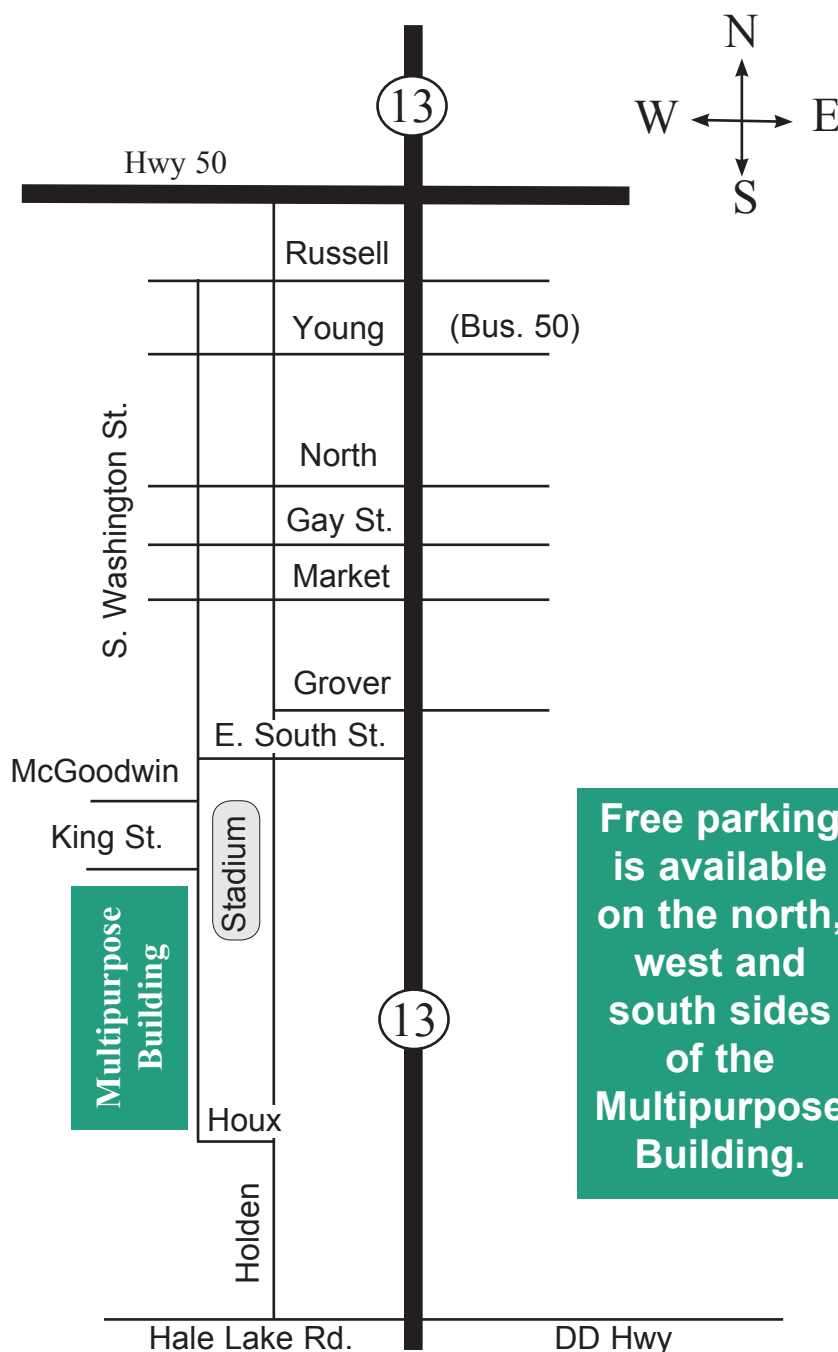
1. The report of officers, directors and committees,
2. The election of **TWO** directors from District 3 and **ONE** director from District 5 to serve until the third succeeding annual meeting of the members, or until their successors have been elected and shall have qualified. The following members have been nominated for directors:
 - District 3**
Robert Simmons, Warrensburg, Mo.
 - District 3**
Richard Strobel, Concordia, Mo.
 - District 5**
Densil Allen, Jr., Warrensburg, Mo.
3. The voting on revisions to cooperative bylaws, and
4. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

seal

Robert Simmons, Secretary

July 10, 2017

Map to UCM Multipurpose Building



From the Boardroom...

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

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Clark Bredehoeft. Robert Simmons, secretary of the cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Max Swisegood, Richard Strobel, Jeremy Ahmann, Dale Jarman, Sandra Streit and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, and Kim Lewis, administrative assistant.. Absent was Densil Allen Jr.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the amended minutes of the regular meeting of March 23, 2017, expenditures for the month of March 2017; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following March 2017 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 and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray presented the safety report which was approved.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft and Gray reported their attendance at the AMEC meeting. Highlights included NRTC activities, NRTC delegate discussions, AECl report given by David Tudor, Richard Moore and David Klindt gave the Legislative Report and AMEC financials. Gray discussed the Lineman's Rodeo. The board will give it further discussion.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported their attendance at the recent board meeting and annual meeting, and shared highlights including AECl update, financials, outage report, safety, construction and operations, and storm damage. Gray is now the secretary of the group.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Jarman gave a summary of scholarships given by the cooperative -- five one-time scholarships and one renewable scholarship were given. The board discussed future recommendations. Youth Tour and CYCLE winners were also announced.

DISCUSSION OF BYLAW CHANGE

Gray discussed a potential bylaw change -- if a member leaves, it would allow for immediate payment of the past due account with capital credits without waiting for maturity. No action was taken.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TIMELINE REVIEW

Gray discussed the strategic planning goals and how they were met. The board discussed the Policy Committee needs to meet.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included breakfast for all employees for Lineman Appreciation Day, Lake Michael subdivision request for road repair and a building update.

ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Gray discussed the annual meeting. The food menu and gift certificates were discussed. The Nominating Committee will meet May 11, 2017.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session.

MEETING ADJOURNED

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • March 2017

	This month	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Revenue	2,064,691	7,382,280	7,031,926
Power Bill Expense	1,298,264	4,217,774	4,353,366
Opertion & Maint. Expense	382,125	864,630	563,805
Depreciation Expense	170,956	511,640	492,724
Interest Expense	105,254	306,760	309,899
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,956,599	5,900,804	5,719,794
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(168,193)	663,004	509,122
Other Margins	50,043	112,472	63,160
TOTAL MARGINS	(118,150)	775,476	572,282

Mackie is appointed line foreman, Minnis will run service truck

Two West Central Electric employees have been promoted to new positions within the cooperative, according to General Manager Mike Gray.

Former Line Foreman Robert Minnis is now running the service truck for the eastern portion of the system. He will be responsible for service connects and disconnects, meter checks, dusk-to-dawn light repairs and locates.

Minnis was hired in 1990 as a

second-year apprentice lineman, and after completing the apprenticeship training program, he became a journeyman lineman in 1993.

Mackie has been appointed as line foreman on the construction crew

where he will act as supervisor.

He was hired in 1998

as a laborer on the ground source heat pump crew.

He entered the apprentice program in June 2000, and became a journeyman in 2005.



Mackie



Minnis



COOPERTIVE PRINCIPLE #6 AT WORK...Cooperation Among Cooperatives, the sixth of the Seven Cooperative Principles, was alive and well early in May when cooperatives around the state sent mutual aid to Kansas to help fellow cooperatives recover after a late-season snow-storm. West Central Electric Cooperative linemen (l-r) Jeff Campbell, Jesse Underwood, Brandon Heck and Billy Mackie traveled to Pioneer Electric Cooperative in Ulysses, Kan. to assist with storm repairs.

Older adults are at a greater risk for electric hazards in the home

Statistics show that home fires, from a variety of causes, result in a significant number of deaths and injuries each year. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated average of 371,700 home structure fires per year. These fires cause an estimated average of 2,590 civilian deaths and 12,910 civilian injuries.

Although electrical hazards plague the public at large, older adults are burdened with the gravest risk. Adults over the age of 65 are more than twice as likely to die from a house fire as the general population, and this risk increases with age. Those 75 years of age and over are challenged with a risk that is 2.8 times higher, and adults over 85 are at a staggering risk that is 3.7 times higher. As baby boomers enter retirement age, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) has predicted that the percentage of older Americans will increase significantly, thus making a corresponding increase in fire deaths and injuries among older adults probable.

Electrical failures are a leading cause of home fires every year, and electrical distribution and lighting equipment fires have been shown to increase in

frequency with increasing dwelling age. Homes with aging electrical systems are at a heightened risk for electrical fires, posing a serious risk for older adults who have remained in the same home for an extended period of time.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, half of the homes in use in the United States were built before 1973, which is long before many of the electronics and appliances we use today were even invented. Unfortunately, our increased demands for energy can overburden an older home's electrical system causing fires or electrocutions.

Many home electrical fires can be prevented by using more up-to-date technology and by recognizing warning signs your home may be showing. Follow these easy safety tips to identify and prevent electrical hazards in your home:

- Regularly check all cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage or wear.
- Use extension cords only temporarily.
- Be sure that outlets that are not overloaded with too many devices. They can overheat and start a fire.
- Look and listen for warning signs of an electrical problem such as outlets and

Continued on page 8



MORE MUTUAL AID...West Central Electric linemen were busy on mutual aid calls in May. Brandon Steffen (left) and Derek Cole unload their truck after returning from spending their Memorial Day weekend assisting CoMo Electric Cooperative repair damage from a severe thunderstorm as well as at least two tornados that caused more than 7,000 members there to be without power over the holiday weekend. Other cooperatives joining included Boone, Sac Osage, Southwest and Central Missouri.

July 1 is International Day of Cooperatives...

Electric cooperatives are lighting the world

Ten Interesting facts about NRECA International

On July 1, co-ops across the globe will celebrate the International Day of Cooperatives, which recognizes and reaffirms the role of co-ops in economic, social and cultural development—a role we are familiar with at West Central Electric.

NRECA International was established in November 1962 to bring electricity to rural communities in developing countries and share lessons learned in the electrification of the rural United States. Working with various funding agencies and international partners, NRECA International has pioneered low-cost rural electrification in countries by designing distribution grids, constructing lines and creating community-owned and operated sustainable utilities. Sound familiar?

WCE was proud to send one of our own, lineman Brandon Steffen, to Bolivia last year to participate in bringing electricity to two villages. Over the last 50 years, programs designed by NRECA International have provided more than 126 million people in 43 countries with access to safe, affordable

and reliable electricity. Here are 10 facts about NRECA International that may interest you:

1. Over the last 50 years, NRECA International has helped establish 250 rural utilities around the world.
2. Currently, NRECA International is involved in projects in Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia, Haiti, Bolivia, Guatemala, Bangladesh and the Philippines.
3. NRECA International's work is supported by many partners. Electrification programs have been made possible with funding support from America's electric cooperatives, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, bilateral donors and multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank.
4. NRECA International provides opportunities for America's electric cooperatives to share their expertise and help expand electricity access in rural communities around the world. Today, more than 300 electric cooperatives support the work through monetary contributions, material donations and sending hundreds of electric co-op linemen and

employees abroad as volunteers. They continue to help bring first-time access to electricity, and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

5. Over the last three years, NRECA International has helped electrification planners in African governments to set out their rural electrification strategies and investment plans in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

6. In 2014, NRECA International established a new electric co-op in Haiti with funding from the United Nations Environmental Program, USAID and the Inter-American Bank. Twelve electric cooperatives answered the call to help by sending 40 volunteer linemen to complete the job.

7. Witnessed by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, NRECA's first signed inaugural cooperative agreement with USAID led to the creation of a small electric co-op in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Today, CRE (Cooperativa Rural de Electrificación) is the world's largest electric co-op in the world with 600,000 members.

8. Nearly 50 years ago, NRECA International helped establish a small electrification program in the

Philippines funded by USAID. In 2015, the Philippines reached a milestone when the country's 119 electric co-ops brought electricity to 50 million people in 36,000 rural villages and rural towns.

9. NRECA International is implementing the USAID-funded Pilot Project for Sustainable Electricity Distribution (PPSELD) in Caracol, Haiti. PPSELD's service territory is the only region that receives reliable electricity 24 hours a day providing more than 9,000 consumers with power.

10. In 1983, about 13,000 Bangladesh citizens living in rural areas had access to electricity. That number is now almost 68 million. This growth came as a result of the creation of 79 electric cooperatives started with the help of NRECA International through a USAID program.

To learn more about NRECA International, please visit www.nrecainternational.coop.

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Follow the path to energy independence

While fireworks and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes to mind when discussing energy efficiency. Perhaps it should.

If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately help our country on a path toward greater energy independence. And that's worth celebrating.

BENEFITS OF EFFICIENCY

At its essence, greater efficiency means less energy is used for the production of goods and services. For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit – more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less

energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for co-op members. For many, this is reason enough to strive for greater energy efficiency. On a national level, energy efficiency, sometimes called the “fifth fuel,” has a more profound impact. It can potentially boost the economy by allowing consumers and businesses to investment in other areas. As importantly, greater energy efficiency may slow the rate at which domestic energy is depleted, and therefore reduce or diminish the need for foreign energy.

STRIKE UP THE BAND

There's no need to wait for the first exploding burst of fireworks in the night sky to start your energy efficiency efforts. Every American can take charge of their own energy use, regardless of the date on the calendar. Small steps can lead to a big difference for you and your

neighbors, whether across the road or across the country.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with mechanical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less efficient appliance or with a new ENERGY STAR model or upgrading to new, insulated windows. Less expensive actions include improving the seal of your home's “envelope” by caulking exterior windows and doors and sealing openings where pipes and ductwork meet the outside. Swapping out the last incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with LEDs also makes a noticeable difference.

SMART CONTROL

The second way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. Leveraging smart thermostat technology is a good place to start. Most smart thermostats contain an

app allowing remote control by mobile phone or tablet. Program your thermostat to reflect your family's schedule. Many thermostat programs allow you to view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor the amount of energy used. Sometimes, however, energy efficiency is simply a matter of changing old habits such as washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or running the dishwasher during off-peak times.


Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, West Central Electric can help you on the journey. For information about energy efficiency programs, contact Member Services Manager Steve Moore at 800-491-3803..

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Keep Food Safe Before, During and After a Power Outage

Unfortunately, power outages do occur from time to time. It's important to know how to keep your food safe during an outage. Use these tips from USDA to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of illness.

Before power outage



Keep refrigerator at **40° or below**. Freeze items like fresh meat and poultry that you won't use immediately. Keep freezer set to **0° or below**. Group frozen foods to help items stay colder longer.




If you anticipate an extended power outage, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge and/or freezer cold.


During power outage

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed!

If the doors stay closed during the length of the outage:




A full freezer will hold its temperature for **48 hours**.




A refrigerator will keep food safe for **four hours**.

After power outage

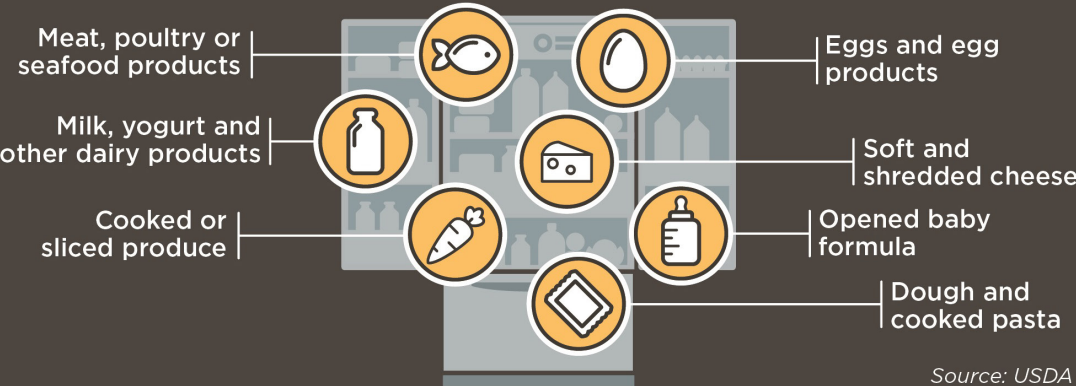


Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and/or freezer.



If the temperatures are safe, the food should be safe to eat.

Foods that should be thrown out after an extended power outage:



Source: USDA

Older adults are at greater risk for electric hazards

From page 1

switches that are warm, or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing sounds.

- Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage. And make sure all circuits are labeled correctly.
- Consider having your breakers upgraded to state-of-the-art AFCI circuit breakers. Keep the electrical panel accessible so you can quickly shut off power in an emergency.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Place alarms inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area. Test them once a month, change the batteries at least once a year, and replace the alarm itself every ten years.

These vital tips are featured in ESFI's newly launched “Home Fire Safety for Older Adults Safety Awareness Program,” which provides tools to educate older adults and their families nationwide about home fire hazards related to cooking, heating, and electrical equipment. A full range of resources for older adults, including detailed fact and tip sheets as well as public service announcements, can be found by visiting www.esfi.org/safetyeducators. This effort is part of ESFI's National Electrical Safety Month initiative, “Electrical Safety for All Ages,” which takes a multigenerational approach to electrical safety by encouraging family members of all ages to work together to identify and correct potential home fire hazards.

Visit www.esfi.org/NESM for ESFI's full range of National Electrical Safety Month materials, which also include children focused materials are part of its “Be Smart about Fire and Electrical Safety” program.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c) (3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school, and workplace. ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities.