



West Central Electric Cooperative

December 2018

ElectricNews

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

Crews work for weeks on Hurricane Michael repairs

The boys are back in town.

West Central Electric crews who spent two weeks in Florida assisting with hurricane repairs returned home Oct. 24 after working 16-hour days restoring power to thousands left without after Michael devastated the coast of the Sunshine State.

Matt Schellman, Jesse Underwood and Johnathon Sullins of the Oak Grove location and Brandon Heck of the Higginsville location left Oct. 10 just ahead of Hurricane Michael making landfall.

The crews waited it out in Alabama, and then headed to Talquin Electric Cooperative in Quincy, Florida once it was safe to travel.

Missouri's electric cooperatives sent 123 linemen from 23 of the state's cooperatives to lend a hand. The crews had to cut their way into the final approaches to Talquin Electric Cooperative, one of the Florida electric cooperatives that was near the center of the massive storm. Just short of their goal after a long drive from a staging area in Athens, Georgia, the cooperative linemen pulled out their chain saws

and cut for nearly three hours before the road could be cleared enough to reach Talquin Electric headquarters in Quincy, Florida.

Yes, there were alligators. Yes, crews slept in a Boy Scout campground for two weeks. Yes, the devastation was unimaginable.

"This was my third hurricane, and this

Round 2...

was the worst one yet," Heck said. "I felt bad for them. It was a mess. Lots of broken trees and poles, trees on houses and houses with no roofs."

After a thorough safety briefing, they were assigned "bird dogs," employees of the local cooperative who served as guides as they worked in the storm-ravaged area. As the storm passed through the cooperative's service area near Tallahassee, nearly all of the cooperative's 55,000 members were without power. Talquin also suffered severe damage to its distribution and transmission lines, complicating restoration efforts Talquin



WCE linemen (l-r) Johnathon Sullins, Brandon Heck and Matt Schellman work to set poles during a two-week trip to Florida to help with Hurricane Michael repairs. (More coverage on page 2)

Electric reported on its Facebook page, "At the height of the outages, 98 percent of Talquin members were without power. Talquin's infrastructure has sustained comprehensive damage — approximately 1,000 broken poles and numerous downed wires — throughout the entire service territory, that will lead

to extended restoration times." Talquin's transmission provider, Duke Energy, also sustained extensive damage to its transmission infrastructure that supplies multiple Talquin substations.

Although the damage was immense, Heck said the thing that stood out to

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Please join us for our annual Member Appreciation Day

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018
at our Higginsville and Oak Grove offices

Visit our offices and register to win:
***\$25 energy credit
on your January 2018 electric bill**

(Four certificates will be given away at each office.)

Come on in to our offices and join us for coffee,
punch and cookies to celebrate the season!

*Also register to win limited edition Willie Wiredhand collectible ornaments

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

Crews work for weeks on Hurricane Michael repairs

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him was the kindness of the residents who had been nearly two weeks without power.

“This was my third hurricane, and this was the worst one yet. I felt bad for them. It was a mess.”

WCE Lineman Brandon Heck

“They were the nicest people I’ve ever met,” he said. “They would come by on their way to pick up food and ask if they could pick up some for us. They brought us water and coolers of Gatorade, cookies, cake and pizza. They were so friendly for the amount of time they were without power.”

Heck also gave kudos to the employees of Talquin Electric. “They were great,” he said. “They went out of their way to get us anything we needed.”

Missouri’s electric cooperatives have a long history of lending a helping hand to its cooperative peers in trying times. Crews from WCE have assisted with many storm repairs over the years, including monster hurricanes Katrina and Rita in August and September of 2005.

Missouri’s assistance efforts were spearheaded by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. The Jefferson City-based association represents all 47 of Missouri’s electric cooperatives.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES...For the second time this fall, Missouri Electric Cooperatives sent crews from across the state down south to help with devastating hurricane repairs. This time, it was Hurricane Michael and linemen were headed to Florida. (Top photo) WCE lineman Jesse Underwood works on a tangle of line near a transformer pole. (Bottom photo) A line of trucks sit in the middle of a blocked roadway while their crews work to cut away trees and brush blocking their way. Some linemen spent hours cutting their way to the cooperative they were in route to help following the destruction of Hurricane Michael.



Make this holiday season as safe as it is magical

The holidays are upon us. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. West Central Electric wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

INSPECT YOUR SEASONAL ITEMS

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires
- Rodent damage to wires
- Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

EXTENSION CORDS ARE TEMPORARY

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

NEVER DEFEAT SAFETY DEVICES

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a

safety feature, find a safe solution.

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

BEWARE OF POWER LINES THROUGH TREES

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact WCE's Right-of-Way Department at 800-491-3803.

STAY AWAY FROM YOUR SERVICE CONNECTION

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights. If you must perform work close to your service entrance, contact WCE and we can send out a crew to temporarily wrap the wires in a protective shroud.

READ THE FINE PRINT

If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other electrified holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE KIDS AND PETS

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your

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SAFETY AWARD...West Central Electric was recognized at the October AMEC Annual Meeting for achieving a total of 73,987 working hours without a lost-time accident. Receiving the award on behalf of the cooperative from Rob Land, AMEC Vice President of Risk Management and Training (left) Member Services Manager Brent Schlotzhauer (right).

Electrical Safety Checklist

Nearly half of all home fires occur during winter months. Take a few minutes to identify and correct any potential electrical hazards to ensure the safety of your home.

SWITCHES AND OUTLETS

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch? Warm switches or outlets indicate an unsafe wiring condition. | YES NO |
| • Are any outlets or switches discolored? Discoloration indicates dangerous heat buildup at these connections. | YES NO |
| • Do plugs fit snugly into outlets? Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires. | YES NO |

CORDS

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Are any cords cracked, frayed or damaged? Damaged cords can expose wires, causing shock or fire hazard. | YES NO |
| • Are any cords pinched by furniture or windows, or attached to anything with staples or nails? Pinching and/or stapling cords can damage the insulation, causing shock or fire hazard. | YES NO |
| • Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis? Extension cords should only be used temporarily. | YES NO |

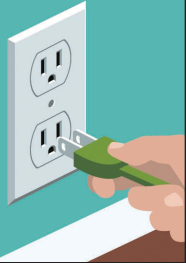
ELECTRIC PANEL

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Do you have recurring tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses? If yes, this could indicate you're exceeding a safe level of electrical current. | YES NO |
| • Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)? AFCIs provide greater fire protection. Check your circuit breakers for the AFCI label. | YES NO |



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Please note this is not a comprehensive safety checklist. Visit ESFI.org for more information. Source: ESFI



From the Boardroom...
Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Sept. 25, 2018

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, Jeremy Ahmann and Sandra Streit. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and general counsel Rod Widger.

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 Aug. 23, 2018; expenditures for the month of August 2018; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following August 2018 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. Gray reported on a mutual aid crew's return from South Carolina, I-70 Speedway project and KCPL's intent to serve, a quarry inquiry, deployment of brush and spraying crews, and statewide coordination of Hurricane Florence mutual aid. He reviewed the interview process for a journeyman lineman position, as well as reported that Operation Round Up participation is holding at approximately 80 percent of members.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray gave the safety report for the month of August.

NW REPORT

Swisegood presented the NW report for August. He discussed highlights of the business, operations and financial activities of NW, including a review of CEO performance and compensation.

CFC AND FEDERATED VOTING DELEGATE

Gray was designated as the voting delegate and Swisegood was designated as the alternate for the Region VII-X meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Following the close of executive session, the board resolved to accept and implement the Wage and Salary Committee recommendations.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented his monthly Manager's Report. Items of interest included the status of a building improvement project. The board declined to change the scope of the project prior to receiving reliable project cost numbers. Gray also discussed AECI Biennial Survey, a 6-year extension of a ground lease which was passed by the board as well as the approval of an extension with the current tennant. An announcement of a change of auditor affiliation was made as well as a request for board retreat agenda input. Gray discussed termination of collection agency relationship and a property fencing project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • August 2018

| | This month | YTD 2018 | YTD 2017 |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Revenue | \$2,448,240 | \$20,377,880 | \$17,909,165 |
| Power Bill Expense | 1,481,160 | 12,121,659 | 10,763,572 |
| Operation & Maint. Expense | 247,255 | 1,827,786 | 1,916,645 |
| Depreciation Expense | 178,535 | 1,416,853 | 1,378,343 |
| Interest Expense | 119,711 | 865,265 | 854,849 |
| Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense) | 2,026,661 | 16,231,563 | 14,913,409 |
| Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses) | 123,308 | 1,863,615 | 756,442 |
| Other Margins | 125,692 | 222,088 | 188,178 |
| TOTAL MARGINS | \$249,000 | \$2,085,703 | \$944,620 |

Make this holiday season as safe as it is magical

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home is childproof. Every cabinet is locked and every outlet is covered. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and

mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.

Justin LaBerge 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

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holidays? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet, even when they're not in use.

Source: energy.gov



IMPORTANT NOTICE
to members when making payments by phone

When making a payment using the automatic payment number, please double-check electric account numbers and bank account numbers to make sure they are correct. One missed number will result in payments being posted to the wrong electric account.

Net Metering & Interconnection Act

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source. Our policy, agreement and application now reflect the new standards set by the Net Metering and Easy Connection Act as of January 1, 2008. For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

WCE offices will be closed the following holidays:
Monday, Dec. 24 and Tuesday, Dec. 25
in observance of Christmas.
and
Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019
in observance of New Year's Day.