



West Central Electric Cooperative

March 2019

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# ElectricNews

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



## Gia was not nice

### Winter storm was worst in several years for WCE

January's "predicted" snowfall proved to be another weather event that didn't pan out as expected – only not for the good. Winter Storm Gia dumped heavy snow across Missouri, and at its peak knocked out power to nearly 20,000 cooperative members around the state.

More than 8 inches of snow fell across the area, causing outages for several Missouri electric cooperatives, including more than 3,000 WCE members. The storm came in Friday morning, Jan. 11 as rain and quickly changed over to large, wet flakes that didn't stop for more than 36 hours.

Crews were called out about 2 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12, and spent the rest of the day and into the night just treading water as the outages came in faster than they could get things repaired.

"Because of the heavy, wet snow that collected on lines and trees, several outages that were repaired went right back out again," Operations Manager Randy Burkeybile said. "As the snow would fall from the sagging lines, they would gallop and slap together, and cause another outage."

Deep, heavy snow caused linemen to have to deal with stuck trucks and difficult access while trying to make repairs.

Crews from United Electric in Maryville/Savannah, North Central Electric in Milan, Grundy Electric in Trenton, Farmers Electric in Chillicothe and Platte-Clay Electric in Kearney were called to assist WCE crews with restoration efforts.

All services were repaired by mid-day Monday, Jan. 14.

**A FRUSTRATING BATTLE...**(At left) West Central Electric Cooperative journeyman lineman Derek Cole works to repair a line during Winter Storm Gia, which knocked out power to more than 3,000 co-op members in January. Crews fought a losing battle thorough the first day of the storm as heavy, wet snow continued to fall, hampering restoration efforts and refusing to let linemen get ahead.

**NOT AS PRETTY...**If you notice the snow-covered powerline sagging in the center of the right-side photo, it makes the wintry scene not as pretty as at first glance. Linemen dealt with many snow-covered, sagging power lines and tree branches while working to repair outages during Winter Storm Gia. (Left photo) Final snowfall total at the headquarters office in Higginsville was almost nine inches.



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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-op policy priorities for the new Congress

Every time a new Congress convenes, electric cooperatives have the opportunity to educate new lawmakers on issues that matter most to their consumer-members and the communities they serve. The 116th Congress kicked off in January with more than 100 new members in the House and Senate.

Since then, co-ops have been working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization that represents more than 900 not-for-profit electric cooperatives, to introduce ourselves to new members on Capitol Hill. Here

are several priority issues that we're bringing to lawmakers' attention.

### **Energy Policy and Infrastructure**

The potential for energy and infrastructure legislation presents a significant opportunity as electric cooperatives work to meet the growing needs of their local communities. NRECA will work to ensure that any infrastructure package focuses on more than roads and bridges, including opportunities to modernize the electric grid and expand rural broadband access. This is critical to ensuring that rural America is not left behind in the 21st century economy.

### **Environment**

NRECA will promote and encourage bipartisan support for renewable energy research and development programs—including programs that focus on finding a viable use for carbon capture, utilization and storage, which comprise a suite of technologies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Cooperative renewables use has increased substantially in recent years, more than doubling since 2010.

### **Tax Policy**

The 2017 tax reform law included a provision that treated federal grants as

income. This threatens the tax-exempt status of some electric cooperatives, because many co-ops rely on government grants to maintain and expand their infrastructure and provide services to their local communities. America's electric cooperatives will seek to fix this unintended consequence of the tax law.

### **Grid Resilience**

Protecting our nation's vast power grid is a national priority and focus for electric cooperatives. Ensuring appropriate information sharing and preserving existing partnerships and structures are essential to these efforts. We will

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## Be prepared for spring storms

Spring can bring quite the array of weather-related dangers to the United States. Various parts of the country are at risk for tornadoes, floods, thunderstorms and lightning, hail, wildfires, and tsunamis during March, April, and May. Help your family stay safe this spring by knowing what types of hazardous weather affects your area, learning key safety steps, and making preparations.

To prepare, put together supplies for an emergency kit. Your emergency preparedness kit should include items such as enough water and food for three days, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit. A full list of suggested items can be found at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Check the forecast and hazardous weather outlook regularly. Plan ahead so you do not get caught outside in a storm. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining, even if you do not see clouds. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance.

If you are inside when a storm hits, stay inside. Keep away from windows and go to the lowest level of your home. If you do get caught outdoors during a storm and are unable to get into a safe building, take shelter in an enclosed vehicle with a hard-top roof—not an open-frame vehicle like a convertible.

If you are outside during a tornado and you cannot find shelter, do not take cover in a vehicle or under a highway overpass. Find a ditch or ravine, lie flat, and clasp your hands behind your head

to protect yourself from flying debris.

Just because a severe storm ended, flood receded, or wildfire extinguished does not mean the danger has passed. A variety of hazards can be left behind.

Touching a downed line or anything

limb, could get you injured or even killed. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 to notify emergency personnel and the utility immediately. During flooding, if there

energized from contact with electrical equipment inside or outside the home, do not enter the area.

For more safety tips, please visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Stay alert for spring weather warnings

Spring weather can change quickly and bring volatile storms with tornadoes, heavy rains, high winds, and lightning. To be prepared and stay ahead of the danger, it is important to check weather forecasts and stay up-to-date on weather conditions. One way to do so is through handheld devices and the weather resources that they provide.

One weather alert you can subscribe to is the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). These notifications are sent much like a text message to all subscribers' WEA-enabled devices. The messages are authorized alerts sent from government agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, and the National Weather Service (NWS).

The types of alerts include extreme weather warnings and local emergencies requiring evacuation or immediate action. After receiving an alert, follow the action advised by the emergency message. Get more information from a news website or station or by turning on your weather radio.

You can take additional precautions by installing a weather safety app so you can receive up-to-date weather information at all times. NOAA Weather Radar shares official NWS information on warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazards 24/7 with coverage in 96 percent of the country. Some of the other free applications that you can download

onto your mobile device include:

- The Red Cross offers an app that allows you to monitor 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts.
- The Weather Underground App is a network of personal weather stations. Users can submit their own weather observations alongside the professional forecasts.
- The Weather Channel also has an application that provides all of the information from their television station at your fingertips on your mobile device.

There are additional precautions that should be taken to help keep you and your family safe:

- Create an emergency preparedness kit, including necessary supplies for a potential power outage. A full list of suggested items can be found at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).
- Develop a family communication plan with a meeting space in case of a disaster.
- If you come across downed power lines after a storm, call 911 to have the utility notified immediately. Never touch downed lines or objects that could be in contact with those lines. Just because power lines are damaged does not mean that they are dead. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same.

For more safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# Winter Storm Gia...



**DOWN IT COMES...**Linemen spent a lot of time knocking off snow that had accumulated on lines, causing them to sag. Above, serviceman Robert Mlnnis clears a line of snow.



**MESSY RIGHT-OF-WAY...**This right-of-way by the race track in Johnson County shows the obstacles linemen were up against as they worked to get the power back on. The heavy, wet snow collected on tree branches and bushes blocking access to lines and poles. Crews had to spend time clearing their way in order to get to problem areas.



**HELP ARRIVED...**WCE lineman Zac Wallpe helps visiting crews get familiar with the areas on the system on which they will be working.



**SURROUNDED...**Lines were surrounded by snow causing them to sag. Several outages occurred as snow began to fall off lines causing them to "gallop" and slap together.

# From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held December 20, 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, Sandra Streit, Jeremy Ahmann and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and general counsel Sheri Smiley.

## 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 Nov. 29, 2018; expenditures for the month of November 2018; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

## APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 2018 reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Michael Newland discussed monthly and annual budget comparisons, presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales. He discussed line loss calculations and sales comparisons year-to-date. He also discussed equity level, long range planning, and peak and demand charges.

Engineering Report: Dan Disberger gave a staking department report, an update on the potential of a new subdivision, an update on the Dollar General in Warrensburg and pole inspections. He also provided a right-of-way report, discussed areas currently being worked on and gave an update on 2019 Right of Way Proposals and spray proposals.

Operations and Safety Report: Randy Burkeybile reported on the crews, pole changes and new services. He gave an update on the operations fleet, reported on outages for the month, and gave the safety report which included the monthly safety meeting, crew visits, safety training and the safety committee report. He discussed construction, maintenance and new service builds as well as an unannounced audit by MECIP.

Member Services Report: Brent Schlotzhauer gave an update on Operation Round Up, and the Youth Tour CYCLE visits made to the schools. He reported on net metering applications made. He also discussed the new position that was filled.

## SEPTAGON UPDATE ON OAK GROVE BUILDING

John Frandsen from Septagon gave an update on the Oak Grove Building. He reported that the civil engineer report is complete and discussed the sewer service options and the storm shelter options. He gave updated budget estimates and said construction would begin in early February. A motion to allocate an amount not to exceed \$1,450,000 for the Oak Grove Building was made and passed.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered into executive session at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included retreat information and the schedule and office furniture needed for the Higginsville office.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Strobel discussed a potential topic for the retreat agenda.

## NEW BUSINESS

None.

## MEETING ADJOURNED

### FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • November 2018

	This month	YTD 2018	YTD 2017
Revenue	\$2,382,406	\$27,049,070	\$24,191,506
Power Bill Expense	1,539,424	16,331,872	14,634,745
Operation & Maint. Expense	441,970	5,875,501	5,523,586
Depreciation Expense	179,976	1,955,179	1,905,638
Interest Expense	420,609	1,525,218	1,168,746
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	2,581,979	25,687,770	23,232,715
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(199,573)	1,361,300	958,791
Other Margins	16,629	346,756	294,113
TOTAL MARGINS	\$(182,944)	\$1,708,056	\$1,252,904

# Electric cooperative policy priorities for the new Congress

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advocate for resources and technologies that meet the unique cybersecurity and recovery needs of small and medium-sized utilities to help protect our systems.

With such a large freshman class of lawmakers, educating them about electric cooperatives and the issues we care about will take time and perseverance. Advocating for the interests of our consumer-members and the communi-

ties in which they live is at the very heart of our business.

*\*Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.*

## Reminder: Oak Grove office is temporarily closed for renovations

Renovations at the Oak Grove location began in February and are expected to last until June 1.

Members have a variety of ways to conduct necessary business with the cooperative. Members needing to speak to West Central Electric employees directly can still call 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942 to reach a representative. Bills may be paid in person at the Higginsville office, by mail, online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) or by phone at 1-855-874-5349. The drive-up drop box will continue to be available at the Oak Grove location, and will be checked on a daily basis.

## Reminder to our members...

West Central Electric would like to remind members that there is no mail service to our Oak Grove Office.

Any correspondence or payments must be mailed to WCE headquarters in Higginsville at the following address:

**West Central Electric Cooperative,  
P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037**

*(Walk-in and night-drop box services available at both locations.)*

## Net Metering & Interconnection Act

Missouri's net metering act requires retail electric suppliers to make net metering available to customers who have their own electric generation units that meet certain criteria, one of which is that the unit is powered by renewable energy resources.

Net metering is where the customer gets credit for the electricity he/she generates in lieu of electricity supplied by the electric utility. Net metering provides the best of both worlds for consumers who choose to invest in renewable energy technology: they have the security of grid connection, but are also compensated for the excess power they produce that's fed into the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net-metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source. Our policy, agreement and application reflect the standards set by the Net-Metering and Easy Connect Act (ECA).

Net metering is available to customers on a first-come, first-served basis until the total rated generating capacity of the net-metering systems equals 5 percent of the utility's single-hour peak load during the previous year.

Simple interconnection procedures that standardize interconnection for all Missourians are necessary to promote the use of renewable energy in Missouri. The ECA makes it easier and more cost-effective for Missourians to connect small renewable energy systems to the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative supports sound renewable energy. We just ask that our members do their homework before spending thousands of dollars to add solar, wind or any type of renewable energy source to their home.

For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.