



West Central Electric Cooperative

December 2020

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

ElectricNews

Pandemic

Style Member Appreciation Day

We can't host our traditional Member Appreciation Day Open House, but we can still show our members our love!
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New engineering manager and new district operations supervisor prepare to take hold of new positions

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Over the river and through the woods...travel safely this winter, and know what to do in an emergency

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Operation Round Up wraps up 2020 with last round of grants to several area organizations

*WCE offices will be closed
on the following days:*

**Thursday, Dec. 24 for Christmas Eve
Friday, Dec. 25 for Christmas Day
Friday, Jan. 1, 2021 for New Year's Day**

**SAFETY
FIRST!**

Decorative holiday lights are cheap!
Don't take a chance on faulty lights.
Check every strand before you
hang them. If you find cracked
wires, missing bulbs or other issues,
throw them away and buy new ones.
Nothing ruins the holidays like a
tragedy that can be avoided.

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Headquarters:

7867 S. Highway 13, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037
816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349

To report outages 24/7:

Call 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803 • or report outages at
www.westcentralelectric.coop under "View & Report Outages"

District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

Website:

www.westcentralelectric.coop

General Manager:

Mike Gray

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*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Member appreciation Days are Dec. 1-14

*Open house is cancelled, but
members can still win great prizes*

As COVID-19 continues to alter our best-laid plans, West Central Electric has opted to not to host our traditional Member Appreciation Day and holiday open house.

"We do, however, want to continue to show our members that we appreciate them, so we will still hold drawings for free electricity and co-op Christmas ornaments, just without the punch and cookies," General Manager Mike Gray said.

Members can come to the Higginsville and Oak Grove offices any time to register for the drawings.

"If you come in to pay your bill during these dates, you can put your name in the drawing boxes that will be placed at each of our locations," Gray said. "If you typically don't stop by the office during that time of the month, come anyway. You can register for the drawings and also pick up the new 2021 WCE official calendar," he said.

WCE will draw for two ornaments and four \$25 certificates for energy credit at each office. Winners will be drawn on Tuesday, Dec. 15. Members who win a prize will be notified by phone. Credit will be applied to your electric account if you are a winner of free electricity. Ornaments can be picked up at our offices or we would be glad to mail them to you.

"We may not be able to host our typical open house, and will miss getting to visit in person with our members, but we hope you will have a chance to at least register for the drawing," Gray said.



**Drop by our offices any time
during these dates to register
for \$25 in free electricity
and 2020 Willie Wiredhand
collectible ornaments**

Gray announces employee promotions

Nelson moves into engineering manager position, Gard takes helm at Oak Grove location

WCE General Manager Mike Gray has announced two promotions within the cooperative. District Operations Supervisor Pete Nelson has accepted the position of engineering manager and will be based out of the headquarters office in Higginsville. Lineman Scott Gard has accepted the position of district operations supervisor at the Oak Grove office.

PETE NELSON

Nelson, who held the district supervisor position since 2017 will be taking over for Dan Disberger, who is set to retire in February 2021. Nelson said he is looking forward to the opportunity to expanding his role within the cooperative and service to the members.

"I have always been interested in the more technical side of our business. Now I will have a more direct role in improving reliability and power quality for the membership," he said.

Nelson values the time he spent as a lineman and most recently as district operations supervisor, and said those years of experience will help him advance to the next phase.

"Anyone that moves into a supervisory role soon finds that there is a bigger picture to how the cooperative works than we could see before. By transitioning from lineman to district supervisor and now to manager of engineering, I will have a more complete view of not only what it takes to build and maintain the line but also to meet with the membership, draw the work orders and dispatch the crew to complete the work," he said. "Though we are one cooperative, the western district has different priorities to our more rural areas. It was a great opportunity for me to have served in the Oak Grove office, and it will give me better insight into the needs of the members across the entire system."

Nelson also serves as the cooperative's safety manager, and will continue in that capacity.

"The cooperative has invested substantial time and money to train me as the safety coordinator. I hope to continue to serve the employees

and members by observing, training, and improving WCE's culture of safety," he said.

Working with the Oak Grove crews will be something Nelson said he will miss, but he feels he is leaving the office in good hands.

"I have enjoyed getting to know the linemen at Oak Grove better and the challenge of overseeing the reconstruction of the Oak Grove building. Although it was challenging, I gained a lot of experience," he said.

"I will miss the Oak Grove office and its employees, but I know that Scott Gard will do a great job there. I hope he enjoys his time there as much as I have."

Nelson came to WCE in January 1998 as an apprentice, and worked his way through the years to journeyman lineman, district operations supervisor and safety coordinator, and eventually to his present new position.

SCOTT GARD

Gard joined West Central in May 2000 as an intern. He worked his way through the apprentice program, achieving journeyman status in November 2003, and continued to serve the cooperative and its members in that capacity until his recent promotion to district operations supervisor.

"I am grateful to have this opportunity to transition from lineman to district supervisor. It's exciting to see things from a different point of view in the process of how West Central provides service to our members," he said. "I've been a lineman here at WCE for 20 years, so I know quite a bit about the outside workings of things, but very little about how the supervisors get things to the point where we build it or get the power back on efficiently in a major outage situation."

Gard said he is proud to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather and great grandfather.

"They were both linemen, so I guess you could say it's in my blood," he said.

The decision to leave the familiarity of the field work was difficult, he said, after so many years, but he is looking forward to the challenge.

"I will 100 percent miss the job and working with my buddies out on the line day in and day out, but I hope that with a little help, I can make a positive impact and a lasting difference here at WCE," he said.

Both Nelson and Gard assumed their new positions this fall, and are currently working for the members in that capacity.



Nelson



Gard

Over the river and through the woods...

Travel safely this holiday season

The winter holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual: shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings or attending holiday events. However, all that time in the car can also mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities.

Along with risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle, and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another

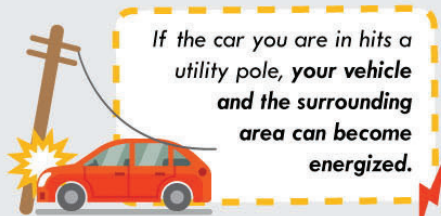
very significant danger to the mix that can cause severe shock, burns or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can save lives.

Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season! For more information about safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.

KNOW WHAT TO DO



if in an Auto Accident with Power Lines



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



Learn more at

SafeElectricity.org

1. Do NOT leave the car, and warn others to stay away.

2. Call 911 to have the utility notified.



3. Wait until a utility professional has told you it is safe.



The **only** reason to exit the vehicle is **if it's on fire.**

If the car is on fire, jump clear of the vehicle: **with feet together, and without touching the car and the ground at the same time.**



Continue to **hop away** with your **feet together** as far as you can.







Warrensburg Middle School 7th Grade Explorer Team \$2,500

Funds used for "Exploring Community Connections" project to enhance advancing leadership, real-world problem solving, interpersonal social skills and promoting citizenship by connecting with local authors and striving to help produce productive community members.



Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Johnson County \$2,000

Funds used for Career Planning Program to perform background checks for volunteers and for session supplies for a newly-formed mentoring program which pairs county youth with professionals as mentors in areas of interest. This program is free to participants.

28 projects funded!
over \$111,500 donated!



Partners for Odessa Parks & Rec. \$2,500

Funds used to provide shade and protection at Dyer baseball fields. Shades will provide spectators from UV rays and foul balls.

Round Up wraps up 2020 project grants

The recent round of grants has been approved and was awarded in October by the West Central Electric Round Up Foundation.

HISTORY

The West Central Electric Round Up Foundation was established in the fall of 2017 with the first funds being collected in September 2018. Members who chose not to opt out of the program have their bills rounded up each month to the nearest dollar with proceeds benefiting foundation applicants chosen for funding.

BOARD MEMBERS

Funds are awarded by a nine-member board made up of WCE members who meets quarterly to evaluate and approve

application requests. Current board members include Dennis Knipmeyer, LuAnn Stillwell, Margie Storck, Sally Davidson, Steve Kropp, Donna Matthews, Scott Stewart, Vivian Bumgarner and Devin Graf.

2020 PROJECTS

To date, the Round Up Foundation has provided more than \$111,500 in funding support for 28 community projects all around the WCE service area.

If you are interested in applying for funding for your organization, applications are available at www.westcentralelectric.com along with a list of program requirements. For more information, contact Kim Lewis at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.



Dennis Knipmeyer



Sally Davidson



LuAnn Stillwell



Steve Kropp



Scott Stewart



Devin Graf



Donna Matthews



Margie Storck



Vivian Bumgarner



Corder Fire Protection District \$5,000

Funds used for the addition of a new bay at the Dover Fire Station, which currently has only two bays for three vehicles.



Concordia School District \$2,000

Funds used to provide pasta and sauce for the district's BackSnack program. Meals go home every week to those with food insecurity. The program currently sends 65 BackSnacks each week.

FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Sept. 24, 2020

A meeting of the board of directors of West Central Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative, in Higginsville, Missouri, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020, pursuant to the bylaws of the cooperative and previous resolution of the board of directors. The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Miles Figg, attorney for the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Densil Allen Jr., Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman and Jeremy Ahmann. Robert Simmons was absent. Also present was General Manager Mike Gray.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, upon motion made by Strobel, seconded by Swisegood and passed, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Aug. 27, 2020; expenditures for the month of August 2020; new membership applications and membership terminations.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following August reports were approved:

Financing and Treasurer's Report: Gray presented the August 2020 Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement. He reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report and Treasurer's Report with monthly and annual budget comparisons. He also gave the investment report. He presented and reviewed statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, cash flow management, and KWH sales and ratios. He reported on August 2020 financials from West Central Services.

Operations and Safety Report: Gray provided a written Operations and Safety Report. His report included the following: a crew update, minimal outages, fleet maintenance and inspections, and crews sent to Louisiana and Texas for hurricane relief. He also reported on safety meetings, crew visits and safety audits of the trucks.

Engineering Report: Gray provided a written Engineering Report. He reported on the following: staking projects and gave a right-of-way report.

Member Services Report: Gray presented a written Member Services Report. He reported on Operation Round Up, gave an



update on scholarships, discussed billing reports and gave net metering reports. He also gave an update on Energy in Today's Classroom.

VOTING DELEGATE FOR CFC & FEDERATED REGIONAL MTG.

Gray was named the voting delegate for the cooperative.

NW REPORT

Gray presented the NW Report. Items of interest included: outages, margins, solar, and reliability. He discussed deferred revenue and the building facilities. No lost time accidents had been reported. He discussed budgets for 2021 and 2022, the backup dispatch center, and gave an update on AECl and their margins, including anticipated rate changes and rebates for 2021.

LEGAL REPORT

Figg presented a report on legal matters.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented his monthly Manager's Report. He reported on the Wage and Salary Committee meeting that was held on Sep. 9, and presented the recommendations from the committee. The board approved the recommendations from the committee and also the salary increase for Gray. The Board also discussed the per diem of the board, and approved a \$50 increase to the per diem of the board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive session was called at 11:14 a.m. and was dismissed at 11:37 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • August 2020

| | This month | YTD 2020 | YTD 2019 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue | \$2,462,959 | \$20,311,837 | \$19,848,987 |
| Power Bill Expense | 1,446,035 | 11,590,499 | 11,895,859 |
| Operation & Maint. Expense | 517,631 | 4,629,774 | 5,228,348 |
| Depreciation Expense | 195,314 | 1,544,109 | 1,466,543 |
| Interest Expense | 118,342 | 951,634 | 945,673 |
| Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense) | 2,277,322 | 18,716,016 | 19,536,423 |
| Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses) | 185,637 | 1,595,821 | 312,564 |
| Other Margins | 6,945 | 95,911 | 172,965 |
| TOTAL MARGINS | \$192,582 | \$1,691,732 | \$485,529 |

