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**West Central Electric Cooperative**

May 2021

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# ElectricNews

## Electrical Safety Month

No game is worth getting struck by lightning. Do you really know when a game should be called?  
Pages 4-5

### PAGE 2

Interested in serving on WCE's board of directors? The 2020 Nominating Committee meets in May. Find out who they are...

### PAGE 3

WCE directors announce rate change effective June 2021. New rates needed to cover the wholesale power cost increase to the co-op.

### PAGE 6

Medical Emergency list will be updated. Please fill out this form if you have medical equipment that requires electricity to operate.



**The  
Co-op Connections Card  
is coming soon!**  
Keep watching our  
newsletter, Facebook page  
and website for more  
information!



## Board of Directors Qualifications

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the cooperative who:

(A) is not a member who continuously uses cooperative energy and service at his/her permanent, primary place of residence; or

(B) is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy supplies to the cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the cooperative; or

(C) Has been an employee of the cooperative within the last three (3) years.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board of directors.

## 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](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) under "View & Report Outages"

### District office:

506 N. Broadway, Oak Grove, MO 64075

### Website:

[www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://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.*

## 2021 West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee

Following is a list of the members named to the 2021 West Central Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving on West Central Electric Cooperative's board of directors, contact any of the committee members in your district listed below. The committee will convene on May 13, 2021 to nominate individuals to be placed on the official ballot. Nominees will be voted on at the annual meeting Aug. 6, 2021 in Warrensburg.

### District I

Donald Fore  
38105 E. Round Prairie Rd.  
Oak Grove, MO 64075  
816-625-3186

### District III

Virginia Haller  
510 NE 201st Rd.  
Warrensburg, MO 64093  
660-747-7330

Adam Heater  
8968 Powell Rd.  
Odessa, MO 64076  
816-529-6594

Jeremy Sanders  
613 NW 1001 Rd.  
Holden, MO 64040  
660-909-3165

### District II

Lance Teiman  
P.O. Box 212  
Higginsville, MO 64037  
660-909-2127

### District IV

Verna Jenkins  
1151 SW 1050 Rd.  
Holden, MO 64040  
816-732-6946

Paul Nolte  
711 W. 35th St.  
Higginsville, MO 64037  
660-909-7285

William Grauberger  
513 NW 1201 Rd.  
Holden, MO 64040  
816-277-4171

### District V

Stephanie Othic  
41 SW 251 Rd.  
Centerview, MO 64019  
660-864-6687

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*\*Terms will expire for District 1 director Jeremy Ahmann, District 2 director Clark Bredehoeft and District 4 director Dale Jarman.*

*Members will elect ONE director each from Districts 1, 2 and 4.*

# Board announces 2021 rate change

## New residential and commercial rates will take effect in June

West Central Electric members can add “rate adjustment” to the list of things Covid put a pause on over the past 12 months. Over a year later, however, the issue can no longer be avoided, according to General Manager Mike Gray.

West Central Electric’s board of directors has determined that a rate increase is necessary to insure stability of the cooperative’s finances into the near future. New rates will take effect in June.

“We are not a profit-driven company -- we are a cooperative, and any margins we do make are returned to you, our members,” Gray said. “We do everything we can to control expenses and still maintain quality service to you.”

The change amounts to a total overall revenue increase for the cooperative of 6.5 percent. The new residential rate will see charges for the first 800 kWh set at \$0.096 and over 800 kWh at a reduced rate of \$0.0795. The service availability charge will increase \$0.10 to \$1.32 per day.

The commercial three-phase monthly rate will now be charged as one flat rate for all kWh. The previous rate was \$0.0951 for the first 800 kWh and \$0.0712 for anything over 800 kWh. The new rate will be \$0.0798 for all kWh. The service availability charge will increase from \$2.13 per day to \$2.24 per day.

Following a cost of service study done in January 2020, consultants recommended a revenue increase of \$1,830,000, Gray

said.

“When the pandemic hit in March 2020, we did not want to put an additional burden on our members,” Gray said. “Then in February of this year, the Polar Vortex set a record-high peak demand which will cause our wholesale power costs for 2022 to rise significantly.”

Estimates are as much as \$1,900,000 or higher, Gray said.

“While working on the 2021 budget in January, the board

revisited the study and recommendation for a rate adjustment,” he said. “The board and management take a rate increase very seriously, and we are constantly looking for ways to be more efficient and keep expenses down.”

Members who use 1,500 kWh per month can expect a monthly increase of \$9.77. Members whose usage is 3,000 kWh per month can expect a monthly increase of \$22.02.

WCE last increased rates in 2016 when the service avail-

ability fee was restructured to reflect a more accurate charge based on what it costs the cooperative to maintain a meter at the location.

### WCE Rate Schedule

*(Monthly Electric Rates effective June 2021)*

#### Residential

Service Availability Charge @ \$1.32 per day

First 800 kWh @ \$0.096

Excess kWh @ \$0.0795

#### Commercial Three-phase

Service Availability Charge @ \$2.24 per day

All kWh @ \$0.0798

### Sample Residential Monthly Bill Increase:

#### 1,500 kWh per month usage

Current bill: \$163.03

New bill: \$172.80

Difference: \$9.77

Increase: 6%

#### 3,000 kWh per month usage

Current bill: \$269.83

New bill: \$291.85

Difference: \$22.02

Increase: 8%

**DIG SAFELY**  
**CALL 811 FIRST**

 **Safe  
Electricity.org**







## WHEN TO CALL IT

Between 2006 and 2018, **396 people were struck and killed by lightning** in the U.S.

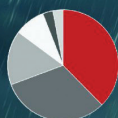


**Two-thirds** of the fatalities happened during outdoor leisure activities.



**Outdoor sports** accounted for 13% of lightning-related deaths.

### TOP SPORTS-RELATED LIGHTNING FATALITIES



- |              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| 1) Soccer    | 38% |
| 2) Golf      | 31% |
| 3) Running   | 16% |
| 4) Baseball  | 9%  |
| 5) Football  | 3%  |
| 6) Disc Golf | 3%  |



**70%** of the fatalities occurred in **June, July, or August.**

Have a **GAME PLAN** to stay safe when severe weather **STRIKES.**

1. **Check weather forecasts** in advance.
2. At first signs of stormy weather, **seek shelter** in a **hard-top car** or **four-sided** building.
3. **Do not** seek shelter under a pavilion or tree.
4. **Do not** sit on or lean against **metal** (e.g. bleachers, fencing).
5. Before resuming activities, **WAIT at least 30 MINUTES** after the last rumble of thunder.

 **Safe Electricity.org**

Source: National Lightning Safety Council

As the weather starts to warm and we approach “ball season,” families start getting anxious for kiddos to get back on the baseball, softball or soccer fields. That would be perfect if we didn’t have to worry about late spring and summer storms. Perhaps you’ve been a parent, coach or player at an outdoor sporting event in a similar predicament: the clouds roll in and the sky gets dark, but you have finish-the-game-itis. After all, it will only take a few more minutes. Or, not wanting to appear overly cautious or paranoid, you wait for others to give the signal. This is one situation when finishing the game, match or inning is not worth the risk. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 20 to 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the United States, each of which is a potential killer, according to the National Weather

Service (NWS). Some flashes strike

directly under the storm where it is raining.

Other times, the flashes reach away from the storm in places where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or nonexistent and catch people off guard.

About 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured,

# No game getting



some suffering devastating and permanent neurological injuries. About two-thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

The NWS recommends that outdoor recreation organizers have an established lightning safety plan and follow it every time inclement weather conditions are present.

As part of the plan, coaches or organizers should establish who will listen to the latest accurate weather forecasts prior to a sporting event. It should also be clear who will make the decision to postpone or cancel if necessary.

The lightning safety guidelines should also address the following, according to the NWS:

•**Once in play, when should the activities be stopped?**

The short answer: When you see lightning, hear thunder or the skies look threatening.

•**Where should participants, officials and spectators go for safety?**

No place outside is safe. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing are ideal. Small outdoor buildings, including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds and pavilions are NOT safe places to seek shelter.

•**When should activities be resumed?**

A minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Electrical charges can linger in clouds after a storm has seemingly passed.

•**Who should monitor the weather and make decisions about play?**

A level-headed and objective person should be the designated weather and lightning monitor. This should NOT be the coach, umpire or referee. The lightning monitor should know the weather safety guidelines and be empowered by teams, parents, coaches and spectators to make decisions.

•**What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?**

Call 9-1-1 for immediate medical attention. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR or AED may be needed if the individual's breathing or heart has stopped.

The NWS webpage on lightning safety and outdoor sports activities answers these questions in more detail.

Don't make decisions on when to call the game or match based on personal experience or pressure from others.

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



is worth  
struck by lightning



# WCE Life Support Equipment list will be updated

In an effort to better serve its members, West Central Electric Cooperative updates the Life Support Equipment List each year.

"Although we add new entries to the Life Support Equipment List as members call and request to be placed on the list,

we seldom get members calling to let us know they need to be removed,"

Communications Specialist

Heather

Hoflander said.

"In an effort to keep the list as

up-to-date as possible, we create a new list every year."

Members are asked to fill out the following form, and mail it to West Central Electric NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2021 to ensure their name appears on the

new list.

The Life Support Equipment List is used by cooperative personnel in the event of a planned outage, for example, during extensive repairs or maintenance. The list is not used as a priority list to get service turned back on in the event of an

out and repair an individual service when the main line is down. Until the main line is repaired, there won't be any power to the individual line."

Inclusion on the list also does not waive disconnection for non-payment.

Members requesting their name be

placed on the Life Support Equipment List should mail the following form to the Higginsville office. If you or a family member is on oxygen, please let us

know how many hours of back-up you have available.

Please keep in mind that if we do not hear from you by JULY 1, 2021, your name will be removed from the current Life Support Equipment List.

**If your name needs to remain on the WCE Life Support Equipment List, You MUST fill out the following form and mail it to West Central Electric Cooperative BEFORE July 1, 2021, or your name will be removed from the current list.**

## ***Request for 2021-22 Life Support Equipment List inclusion***

(Please fill out all information completely.)

Name to appear on list: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on WCE account: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Location Number: \_\_\_\_\_

BEST Phone Number to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

Life support equipment requiring electricity to operate: \_\_\_\_\_

If on oxygen, how many hours back-up? \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out all information completely and mail to Heather Hoflander, West Central Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037.

**West Central Electric Cooperative offices will be closed  
for Memorial Day on Monday, May 31**





## WCE welcomes Tucker Crowe as new apprentice lineman

West Central Electric has welcomed Tucker Crowe to the Higginsville location, according to WCE General Manager Mike Gray.

Crowe is from Palmyra, Mo, and is an apprentice lineman. He said he is excited to work at West Central starting his career in electrical distributions systems.

"I am looking forward to advancing my career and knowledge in the line field," he said.

Crowe graduated from State Technical College in Linn Mo. (formerly Linn State Technical College) in May 2020 with a degree in electrical distribution systems. He will advance through the apprentice program at WCE working with the line crews.

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**Tucker Crowe wastes no time getting started at WCE as an apprentice ineman.**

## Mechanic Paul Werning retires after 32 years of service

For WCE Mechanic Paul Werning, transitioning from full-time employee to retiree will be a bittersweet adjustment, but one he says he will definitely enjoy.

"I'll miss the employees. It's hard to leave after 32 years of creating so many friendships that have turned into a second family. I'll miss being a coop employee, it's something I took great pride in," he said.

Werning joined WCE as a laborer in September 1989. He worked as a groundman/truck driver from 1990 to 2004, when he was hired as the cooperative's mechanic.

Werning said he is proud to have not only worked for the cooperative for so many years, but also for the members.

"I took great pride to say I was with the co-op for 32 years. You were not only working for the electric co-op you were there for the members that depended on you, and trusted that you would take care of them," he said.

That was never more evident than during some of the more "memorable events."

"The ice storms, going out and knowing you were helping so many people get electricity back on was rewarding," he said.

Though he will miss spending his days at the cooperative, Werning said he feels what matters most in life is spending more time with family and enjoying time to make memories.

"It seems like just a few years ago since I started with the co-op and now 32 years later here I am retiring. It doesn't seem possible," he said.

Werning said he will enjoy being with family, and spending more time "watching my grandsons grow and enjoy fishing and hunting with their Papa. And I plan to enjoy time with my wife on the farm looking out over the fields at our Longhorns roaming. Maybe some traveling and relaxing.

"I've worked hard and taken pride in my work, but I'm ready for the next chapter to begin," he said.



**Werning spent his last official day at the cooperative saying goodbye to fellow employees, and a last-minute photo-op with Willie.**



# FROM THE WCE BOARDROOM...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held Feb. 25, 2021

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: Densil Allen Jr., Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Richard Strobel, Stan Rhodes, Sandra Streit, Dale Jarman Robert Simmons and Jeremy Ahmann. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, Manager of Accounting Michael Newland and general counsel Sheri Smiley, as well as cooperative staff members.

## 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 January 2021; expenditures for the month of January 2021; new membership applications and membership terminations.

## APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following January reports were approved:

**Financing and Treasurer's Report:** Newland presented the January 2021 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 discussed the top loads for the co-op for the past year. He reported on January 2021 financials from West Central Services.

**Review and Discuss Rates:** Gray reported that he does not have anything from Toth yet regarding an updated rate study, but that they are looking at the cost of service study and how to update it from 2020 numbers. He discussed the potential impacts of the recent historical storm on rates. The Board will discuss more next month if a rate increase will be necessary and when it would go into effect.

**Operations Report:** Randy Burkeybile provided a written Operations Report. His report included the following: a crew update, outages for the month, brush crews and right of way reports and he discussed how the system had performed during the recent storms.

**Safety and Engineering Report:** Pete Nelson provided a written Safety and Engineering Report. He reported on the following: safety meetings, crew visits, and statewide safety meetings. He also reported on staking projects, pole inspections, new services and change services. He discussed pole rejections that had been found and issues with the treatment of the poles and how they will be fixed. He gave a solar installation update.

**Member Services Report:** Brent Schlotzhauer presented a written Member Services Report. He reported on Operation Round Up. He gave an update on CYCLE and Youth Tour. AMEC will be doing a virtual Youth Tour this year. After discussion a motion to give each West Central Electric recipient a scholarship for \$2,000.00 each was made by Dale Jarman, seconded by Max Swisegood and passed. The English scholarship was



reported on. Interviews with students will be by Zoom. He gave an update on net metering and energy audits. Rebates on EV Chargers were discussed. EV Chargers are required to be "energy starred" by AECI to get a \$250.00 rebate. A discussion was held regarding a West Central Electric rebate on the EV Chargers. Gray will bring back policy language for the board to review for the next board meeting for a West Central Electric rebate for non-Energy Star chargers.

## AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft gave the report from the meeting held on Feb. 3 via Zoom. He had provided the department reports to the Board prior to the meeting. He discussed the director's conference for this year and the consensus was to try and hold an in-person conference.

## NW REPORT

Swisegood and Gray reported on the February board meeting. They reported on outages, wind, and solar. No lost time accidents were reported. They discussed how NW handled the historic storm that was currently happening. The Helicopter will be sold. They gave a report on Associated Electric's system and how it performed during the rolling blackouts. More information will be coming from Associated Electric on this issue.

## NW ANNUAL MEETING VOTING DELEGATE

Swisegood was named as delegate and Gray as alternate.

## LEGAL REPORT

Smiley presented a report on legal matters.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray presented his monthly Manager's Report. He gave a COVID update for the office and the plan in place to bring back full staff to the office. The annual meeting was discussed and the consensus was to try and plan to hold an in person annual meeting this year. The nominating committee will be held on May 13. Names need to be brought back to the next meeting.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

None.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned.

## FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • January 2021

	This month	YTD 2021	YTD 2020
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,936,441</b>	<b>\$2,936,441</b>	<b>\$2,936,067</b>
Power Bill Expense	1,661,319	1,661,319	1,669,239
Operation & Maint. Expense	556,173	556,173	513,805
Depreciation Expense	198,232	198,232	190,704
Interest Expense	115,375	115,375	116,629
<b>Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)</b>	<b>2,531,099</b>	<b>2,531,099</b>	<b>2,490,377</b>
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	405,342	405,342	445,690
Other Margins	6,964	6,964	9,735
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$412,306</b>	<b>\$412,306</b>	<b>\$455,425</b>

