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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

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STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE TOP

Keeping You in the Loop on Rates

As your electric cooperative's CEO, I believe in keeping you informed about the decisions that may impact your service and your bill. At Western, we're not just your power provider — we're your neighbors, committed to delivering reliable electricity while staying true to the cooperative values of fairness, openness and transparency. That's why I want to share the first steps of our process to evaluate and, if needed, adjust our rates. We call this "Straight Talk from the Top," and it's all about giving you the facts. Over the next few months, I will keep you informed every step of the way, but let's start by walking through how we monitor our financial health and begin the rate-setting process.



Running an electric cooperative is a bit like running a farming operation — you've got to keep an eye on the weather, the crops and the budget to ensure everything thrives. For us, that means our member-elected board of directors is always monitoring the co-op's financial health.

They review detailed reports on our revenue (from your electric bills), our expenses (like purchasing power, maintaining lines, and paying our dedicated staff), and the costs of keeping our system reliable. In Kansas,

where storms can knock out power and equipment, staying financially strong is critical to keeping your lights on.

The board looks at trends — like inflation, rising fuel costs for power generation, and the need to replace aging poles and transformers — to see if our current rates are covering what it takes to serve you. They also plan for the future, whether it's upgrading to storm-resistant infrastructure or exploring new technology to keep our system running as efficiently as possible. If the numbers show a gap between our costs and revenue, the board knows it's time to act.

This isn't about profits — co-ops are not-for-profit, owned by you, our members. If Western collects more revenue than is needed, it is returned to our members through capital credits. This is about ensuring we can deliver the reliable, affordable power you depend on, from powering your home to keeping your farm or small business running.



When the board sees a potential need for a rate adjustment, we move to

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Nolan Numrich

Keeping You in the Loop on Rates *Continued from page 12A ►*

phase one, hiring an independent rate consultant to conduct a cost-of-service study. In the past, we've used Power Systems Engineering as our consultation firm. Think of this as bringing in a skilled mechanic to diagnose what's under the hood of our cooperative. This expert digs into every detail of our operations — how much we pay for electricity from our power suppliers, the cost of maintaining 4,000 miles of lines across Kansas prairies, and the investments needed to keep our grid modern and reliable.

The consultant's job is to figure out what it truly costs to deliver electricity to every member, whether you're a family in a rural farmhouse, a small business in town, or a larger operation like a grain elevator. They analyze how each group uses electricity to ensure our rates are fair and equitable. For example, a household might use power mostly in the evenings, while a business might need it during peak daytime hours. The study helps us design rates that reflect these differences while covering our costs.

The result is a comprehensive report that acts like a roadmap, guiding the board toward a rate

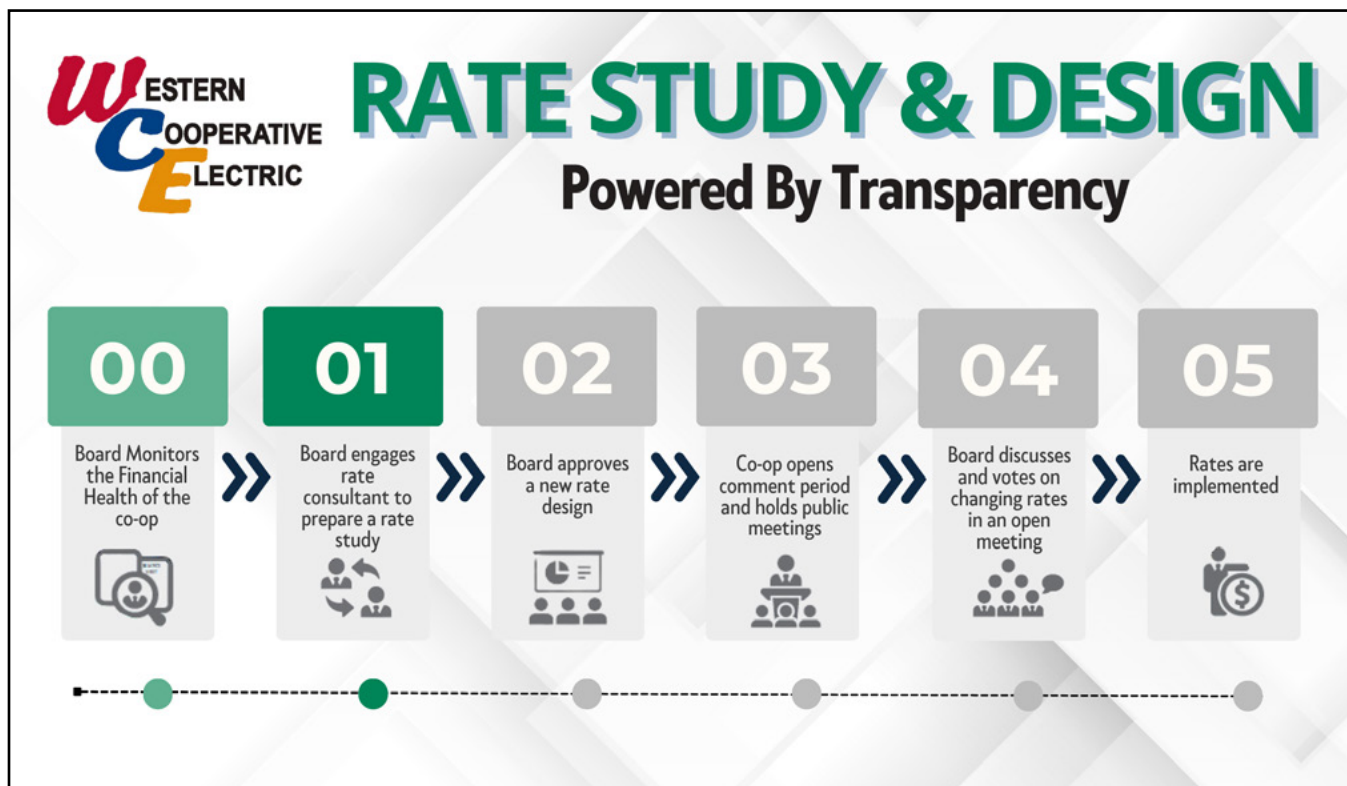
structure that keeps Western financially sound without placing undue burden on any member group. It's a complex process, but it's rooted in our commitment to fairness and keeping your service dependable, no matter where you are in our service area.

POWERED BY TRANSPARENCY

At Western, we know that rate changes can raise questions. That's why we're committed to walking you through every step of this process, from monitoring our finances to bringing in experts to guide us. In the coming months, we'll share more about how we design rates, listen to your feedback, and make decisions in open meetings. You're not just a customer — you're a member-owner, and your voice matters.

If you have questions or want to learn more, stop by our office, give us a call, or check out our website at www.westerncoop.com. We're here to keep you informed and powered, now and for the future.

**HERE TO SERVE,
NOLAN NUMRICH, CEO/GM**



WCE Sponsors Students on Trip to Nation's Capital

ETHAN CARROLL, Ellis High School, and **NICK ROBBERN**, Hoxie High School, recently represented Western Cooperative Electric at the 2025 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held from June 14-20. During their time in Washington, D.C., students deepened their understanding of America's electric cooperatives and developed their leadership skills while connecting with peers from across the cooperative network.

Twenty-seven outstanding student representatives from Kansas were selected by their electric co-ops through a competitive application process. The application process includes an essay and is graded by a panel. Carroll and Robben joined nearly 2,000 students across the country, including four from Hawaii who travel with the Kansas delegation each year.

FROM TOPEKA TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

The Youth Tour kicked off in Topeka with a welcome dinner and icebreaker activities, followed by an exclusive night tour of the Kansas State Capitol led by State Treasurer Steven Johnson and Kansas Representative Kyle Hoffman, alumni of the Youth Tour program.

In Washington, D.C., students explored iconic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, and The People's House — A White House Experience, along with numerous monuments and memorials. Visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Smithsonian museums offered powerful insights into history and culture.

On June 19, during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) National Youth Day, students were inspired by a dynamic lineup of speakers, including NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, Olympic medalist Mike Schlappi, and the 2025 National Youth Leadership Council Spokesperson Maggie Martin.

In addition to the Youth Day program, the Kansas and Hawaii delegations joined peers from Colorado and Wyoming for an engaging leadership workshop led by nationally recognized youth leadership expert Craig Hillier.

Students also had the unique opportunity to meet with U.S. Senators Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall. During these discussions, they asked thoughtful questions on a range of

“The speeches at the youth program were really inspiring. I was especially moved by their messages about perseverance and pushing through challenges. Their personal stories were powerful, and it will stick with me.” **NICK ROBBERN**



Ethan Carroll (left) and Nick Robben recently represented Western Cooperative Electric at the 2025 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

topics that mattered to them, gaining firsthand insight into the legislative process and the role of elected officials.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS AND LASTING MEMORIES

Beyond the educational experiences, students enjoyed unique opportunities to bond with peers from across the country — trading state pins with other state delegations and taking in the sights during a scenic dinner cruise on the Potomac River.

Reflecting on their experience, Robben shared, “The speeches at the youth program were really inspiring. I was especially moved by their messages about perseverance and pushing through challenges. Their personal stories were powerful, and it will stick with me.”

“What really stuck with me was learning how to properly respect the flag and understanding what it actually stands for,” Carroll said.

During the conference, Dominic Hernandez, sponsored by Midwest Energy, was elected by his peers as the 2026 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council. Alongside 43 other student leaders from across the country, Hernandez will assist at PowerXchange, NRECA's annual meeting, to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, in March 2026.

Students who participated in the 2025 Youth Tour are also eligible to apply for the NRECA Glenn English Scholarship. For more information about the Youth Tour or other KEC youth programs, please contact Christina Hayes, chayes@westerncoop.com.

Farm Safety: Top Tips to Protect Kids

Farms and ranches give kids unique opportunities to gain responsibility, independence and strong work ethics. Growing up on a farm helps children develop problem-solving skills, build close family bonds, gain respect for the food cycle, and cultivate a deep passion for the land.

However, agriculture is also one of the most dangerous industries for youth in the U.S. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, with a child lost to an agriculture-related incident approximately every three days. Many of these tragedies occur when kids take on tasks that aren't suited to their age or abilities.

The impact of a farm injury or fatality extends beyond the individual, affecting families and entire communities. The emotional and mental toll can last a lifetime, underscoring the importance of prioritizing safety for everyone.

By implementing safety strategies, farmers, ranchers, families and employees can reap the benefits of farm and ranch life while minimizing risks.

WHY ARE KIDS AT GREATER RISK?

Injuries often occur when children are doing something beyond their mental, physical or emotional abilities. They are susceptible to certain types of accidents and injuries:

- ▶ Children often work on farms at young ages and in hazardous jobs.
- ▶ Their bodies and brains are still developing, affecting coordination, decision-making and impulse control.
- ▶ Kids tire easily, are more likely to get distracted (think cellphones and social media) and may take risks to prove themselves.
- ▶ Many lack experience and may be reluctant to ask questions or admit uncertainty.

GRAIN BIN DANGERS

Grain bins are especially hazardous. Grain can act like quicksand, trapping and suffocating anyone who enters. Most youth grain entrapments are fatal. Kids should never enter

grain bins or “walk down” grain, and all grain storage areas should be off-limits and secured.

In 2010, in Mt. Carroll, Illinois, four young farm workers, aged 14-20, were sent to loosen clumped grain from inside a grain bin. Three of the youth became entrapped in the grain. Two were engulfed and suffocated, and the third was rescued following a six-hour mission. A settlement of \$16 million was awarded to the affected families. This case led to the formation of the Grain Handling Safety Council, www.GrainSafety.org.

5 ESSENTIAL FARM SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

1 KEEP KIDS OFF TRACTORS. Tractors are involved in more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children under 15. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate one if they meet safety guidelines for age, size and maturity.

2 SUPERVISE AND RESTRICT ACCESS. Young children should never be in work areas unsupervised. Fence off or lock hazardous areas like grain bins, animal pens and equipment storage.

3 ASSIGN AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS. Match chores to the child's abilities and maturity. Teens are more likely to take risks, so clear guidelines and supervision are essential.

4 CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT. Remove hazards such as slippery or uneven surfaces, keep equipment keys out of reach and avoid repetitive motion. Provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.

5 TRAIN AND MODEL SAFE BEHAVIOR. Teach kids how to perform tasks safely, practice together until they become proficient, and consistently demonstrate safe habits yourself. Kids learn by watching adults.

FARM SAFETY STARTS WITH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Discuss farm safety regularly with your kids. Clearly explain which areas are off-limits, how to spot hazards, and why following rules is essential. Frequent, open conversations help build safe habits and encourage kids to think before they act.

Conduct safety audits of your farm, ranch and home together. Identifying and fixing hazards not only protects your children but also helps them learn how to prevent injuries.

Supervision is key. Always keep a close eye on children, especially in areas with potential dangers. Remember, learning safe habits takes time and patience — be prepared to repeat instructions to encourage smart, lasting and safe work habits.

For more tips on assigning safe farm tasks to kids, check out the Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines at www.CultivateSafety.org/AYWG.



Think twice before letting kids drive tractors; they are linked to **OVER 40% OF FATAL FARM ACCIDENTS WITH THOSE YOUNGER THAN 15.**

Most kids simply aren't big or strong enough to handle them safely. Make sure any youth operating equipment meets age, size and maturity guidelines.

SAFETY FIRST — EVERY TIME.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG