



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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800-456-6720

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# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

## Western Cooperative Electric, Inc.

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# 'Tis the Season



Tom Ruth

The holiday season is a time for traditions, reflection, and giving back to our community. As a member of Western Cooperative Electric, your

support is invaluable. Our Operation Round-Up program is 100% funded by donations and monthly bill rounding-up contributions. By rounding up, you can help provide critical Western Cares payment assistance to local families in need.

Western Cooperative's commitment to the principle of Concern for Community has been a part of our identity since we first brought electricity to rural Kansas in 1945. Through Operation Round-Up and

Western Cares, we continue to enhance the quality of life in our community.

Unfortunately, as the number of families assisted through the Western Cares payment assistance program continues to rise, the current amount of donations is unable to keep pace, and funds are being depleted quicker than they are being replenished.

Without your help, future Western Cares payment assistance will not be available for struggling families. The Western Cares program shows that even small donations can make a big impact over time.

Although we have given tens of thousands of dollars to local families and individuals together through Operation Round-Up and Western Cares, sustainability is the goal.

Please scan the QR code to sign up or call our office at 785-743-5561 to sign up for Operation Round-Up. If you are already enrolled in Operation Round-Up, one-time donations or a recurring amount can also be added to your monthly electric bill.

With your help, we can ensure all our neighbors have a happy holiday season full of joy and light!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS, TOM**



# Seize Your Opportunity

## Apply for an All-Expenses-Paid Trip of a Lifetime



**APPLY TODAY!**

APPLICATIONS DUE  
JAN. 10, 2024.



Western Cooperative Electric is committed to nurturing the potential of our young generation by offering unique opportunities that mirror the realities of our society, emphasizing the value of dynamic personal interactions. In today's professional world, employers and thought leaders prioritize presenters who can connect with their audience while effectively conveying their message. These remarkable experiences are fully funded and promise to be unforgettable for the youth in our area.

### Who's Eligible?

Any high school junior whose parents or guardians are members of Western Cooperative Electric is eligible to apply.

### How to Apply

To apply, visit [www.westerncoop.com/youth-tour](http://www.westerncoop.com/youth-tour) for detailed application requirements. Each student must complete an application, submit a brief essay, and participate in a virtual interview.

### Electric Cooperative Youth Tour: June 14-20, 2024

Cooperatives from all corners of the United States choose young individuals for this opportunity as part of our strong commitment to the community and our mission to inspire future generations to become leaders. This trip broadens the horizons of many students, revealing the potential for future leadership roles and fostering lifelong friendships. Delegates have the chance

to explore numerous national monuments and participate in the NRECA Youth Day, where youth from across the county come together to listen to inspiring speakers.

### Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp: July 12-18, 2024

At the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, campers engage in daily membership meetings where they form committees and elect a general manager and board of directors. Additionally, campers have the opportunity to enjoy local activities, such as visiting Steamboat Springs, as well as whitewater rafting. They can also take part in camp activities like volleyball, swimming and a talent show. Throughout their time at the camp, students will gain insight into the operations of electric cooperatives through various activities, including a high voltage safety demonstration, crafting a model transmission line, and touring Craig Power Plant.

# Western Returns \$821,787 in Capital Credits

Western Cooperative is more than your local electric utility, and you are more than a consumer. We are not concerned with giving investors a return on their investment. Instead, electric cooperatives, like Western, were created by the communities we serve.

At the end of the year, any remaining margins are allocated to the members based on their proportional electric sales. After a given period, those allocated funds are returned to the members by either a check or bill credit.

In December, Western is retiring \$821,787 of generation and transmission (G&T) capital credits back to our members.

"Members' Economic Participation is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles and one of the many benefits of being a Western member," said General Manager Tom Ruth. "It seems only fitting that we are able to return capital credits to our members during the holiday season."

**MEMBERS IN THE NATIVE SERVICE TERRITORY WHO RECEIVED POWER IN 2012 AND 2021 WILL RECEIVE \$605,704.24**

**OF THE G&T RETIREMENT.** Members on the eastern side of Western's service territory (formally Aquila territory) will receive \$216,083.24 in retirements from 2019 and 2021 G&T allocations.

Members will receive a proportional share of the retirement based on the electricity purchased in the year(s) retired.

"When we retire capital credits to our members, we don't just celebrate a financial transaction but a commitment fulfilled," said Assistant General Manager/Member Service Manager Nolan Numrich. "It's a testament to the shared success and collaborative spirit that defines our cooperative family."

## Moved Recently? No Longer a Member of Western?

You may have unclaimed capital credits if your forwarding address is not updated. For more information about capital credits, visit [www.westerncoop.com/capital-credits](http://www.westerncoop.com/capital-credits).

To search a list of members with outstanding payments, visit [www.westerncoop.com/unclaimed-capital-credits](http://www.westerncoop.com/unclaimed-capital-credits).

## Phase Two of New Rate Implementation Begins Jan. 1

The Western Cooperative board approved a three-year plan to adjust rates in 2022. While there was an overall rate increase in the first year (2023), years two and three (2024, 2025) were designed to be revenue neutral for Western with very little or no change for the average member. All rate adjustments affect members differently based on their rate class and usage. In

many instances, a reduction in the energy (kWh) charges will offset increases in demand and base rates. These adjustments will align with the cost-of-service study to reduce subsidization between ratepayers, not to increase revenue for Western. For more information about the approved rate design, visit [www.westerncoop.com/new-rate-proposal](http://www.westerncoop.com/new-rate-proposal).

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away. For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the Energy Star® label.

SOURCE: [WWW.ENERGY.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGY.GOV)



## Western Welcomes Chapman to Staff

On Nov. 1, Western Cooperative hired **ALLIE CHAPMAN** as a member service representative in WaKeeney. Chapman previously worked as an office patient coordinator.

"Whether consulting with patients or helping members of an electric cooperative pay their bills it is important to have a positive attitude and treat people with respect," Chapman said.

She is a native of Dighton, but has lived in WaKeeney for the past couple of years. In her spare time, Chapman likes to ride side-by-sides and spend time with family at Ceder Bluff Reservoir.

"Everyone at Western has been so friendly and helpful as I learn more about the electrical industry," she said. "I look forward to building trust with Western's members and providing the best service."



Allie Chapman



# Sharing Success Community Grant Applications

Applications will be accepted from Jan. 1, 2024, through July 1, 2024. The Western Cooperative Electric Board of Trustees will review applications and select the winners at the July board meeting, and grants will be distributed in fall 2024.

**WESTERN PLANS TO AWARD UP TO FOUR GRANTS TOTALING \$20,000. THE MINIMUM REQUEST IS \$2,000.**

## Eligibility

There is little restriction on the type of projects that can apply. However, projects must be community-oriented and serve a public need. Generally, contributions to any 501(c)(3) charity are eligible. Select organizations not designated a 501(c)(3) may also be eligible. These organizations include schools and government organizations such as counties or municipalities and their agencies or departments, as long as the donation serves a public purpose. Organizations that are political in nature, limit their activities based on religious affiliation or discriminate will not qualify.

## 2023 Sharing Success Grant Recipients:

- ▶ **PLAINVILLE MEMORIAL LIBRARY** — \$5,000 for outdoor space and building improvements.
- ▶ **RUSH CO. RURAL FIRE (OTIS)** — \$5,000 for radio upgrades
- ▶ **CITY OF BUNKER HILL** — \$5,000 for new city welcome sign
- ▶ **PROJECT DREAM (CEDAR BLUFF RESERVOIR)** — \$5,000 for playground improvements

**APPLY BY JULY 1, 2024**  
[www.westerncoop.com/sharing-success-community-grants](http://www.westerncoop.com/sharing-success-community-grants)

