



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672
800-456-6720

www.westerncoop.com

www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

Western Cooperative Electric, Inc.

Board of Trustees

- Nick Zerr**
President
- Terry Hobbs**
Vice President
- Richard Schaus**
Secretary-Treasurer
- Craig Crossland**
Trustee
- Landon Heier**
Trustee
- Frank Joy**
Trustee
- Marvin Keller**
Trustee
- Susan Rohleder**
Trustee
- Dale Weinhold**
Trustee

General Manager

Tom Ruth
General Manager

Contact Us

635 S. 13th Street
P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672
785-743-5561
FAX: 785-743-2717
www.westerncoop.com

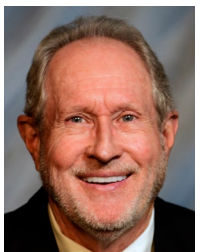
Like us on Facebook

Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook! Just go to www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric to find co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!



FROM THE MANAGER

Giving Thanks This Holiday Season



Tom Ruth

As we head into the holiday season, November brings two important holidays into focus: Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. These occasions serve as

powerful reminders of the blessings we should never take for granted.

First and foremost, I urge you to take a moment to reflect on the immense sacrifices our veterans have made throughout history to secure the precious freedom we enjoy today. Their unwavering dedication deserves our deepest gratitude.

Thanksgiving, too, reminds us to count our blessings, appreciate our families and friends, and cherish all that we share. It's a time to gather with

loved ones and express our gratitude for the abundance in our lives.

In this spirit of thankfulness, I want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to you, our member-owners. Your contributions to society and our communities do not go unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for your partnership.

We must also recognize the dedication of our hardworking employees who tirelessly fulfill our mission to power the homes and businesses of our neighbors. It is their commitment that makes Western Cooperative Electric a symbol of community and service, reflecting the true essence of cooperatives in the heartland of America.

The history of electric cooperatives dates back to the 1930s when the cooperative spirit ignited initiatives to bring electricity to rural America.

Continued on page 12C ▶

Cold Weather Accommodation Effective Nov. 15

The Cold Weather Accommodation policy for residential members runs from Nov. 15 to March 15. This policy allows for delinquent accounts to be subject to disconnection when temperatures exceed 35 degrees for the ensuing 24-hours following the disconnection. This policy does not pertain to PrePayPower billing accounts. For the complete policy, visit www.westerncoop.com/rules-and-regulations.

A Lineman's Timeline: Restoring a Power Outage

BY RON ASCHENBRENNER LINE SUPERINTENDENT WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC



Ron Aschenbrenner

"How long is it going to take?" Those are familiar words to all who work in the electric industry. It's a phrase I've been asked thousands of times in my career. It's the first thing people think when the lights go out. It doesn't take long sitting in the dark to realize how dependent we are on electricity and how much it makes our lives better and easier.

As a lineman, it was always a good feeling to help people get their lights back on. I can remember times when I've been on storm or extended outages re-energizing neighborhoods and heard people in their homes cheering as their lights came on for the first time in days. No matter how tired I am or how long I've been working, that feeling will always make it worthwhile.

But what does it take to get those lights back on? Why does it sometimes take so long? We want to provide you with a better understanding of the process, and the work Western Cooperative line crews are doing to restore your power.

The electricity you use travels a great distance and goes through several steps to get to your home. It starts with a power plant that typically produces voltages of less than 30,000 volts. That voltage needs to be "stepped up" so it can travel long

distances. That process starts in the power plant's substation and switchyard where a transformer will step up the voltage and send it out on transmission lines to another substation.

At the next substation, a transformer steps down the voltage and sends it out to smaller, local substations.

Local substations are the final destination before the electricity reaches your home. Here, electricity is stepped down again so that it can then be delivered to the poles outside your home. Once it arrives outside your home, it is stepped down a final time to 120/240 volts that operate all the devices that power your life.

What I just described is hundreds of miles of line and thousands of poles. That's a lot of exposure for something to happen and cause an outage. Just like your home, our system has breakers. Our breakers help us reduce the exposure of the line and allow us to split our system into sections. Doing so helps limit the size of the outages and allows us to keep as many people on as possible. Breakers also help protect equipment on the line. Ever wonder why your lights blink a few times before going off? That's the breaker. They operate a few times, trying to give the fault a chance to clear the line before they open for good.

Now that the lights have blinked, your breaker has opened, and the power is off, your local electric lineman goes to work.

OUTAGE TIMELINE



LINEMAN IS NOTIFIED

They ask questions to determine if it's an individual or section outage and its location.



CAUSE LOCATED — SAFETY FIRST

Once the cause is located, a safety briefing takes place, identifying hazards and locations of lineworkers and equipment. Lineworkers then isolate and ground the line to prevent backfeed.



REPAIRS COMPLETE

The lineworkers contact dispatch to get clearance to re-energize the line. Once dispatch confirms no one else is working on the line, the breaker is closed restoring power.



THE DRIVE

A crew is dispatched to the outage site. If after hours, lineworkers must travel from their homes, which often adds additional travel time.



WORK BEGINS

Lineworkers take special care and awareness to remove objects causing the outage. While crews work to clear the line, materials required for repairs are located and in transit.



POWER RESTORED — OUTAGE OVER

Restoration time varies by outage depending on the cause, location and materials needed for repair.



ARRIVAL AND INSPECTION

Crews visually inspect the line for open breakers and cause of outage. Evaluating the outage is time consuming but one of the most important steps of restoration.



MATERIALS ARRIVE

Materials and equipment arrive onsite to make the repair. Broken material is removed, inspections performed and repairs made.



CREWS RETURN SAFELY HOME

Our goal is to restore power safely and efficiently and ensure co-op employees go home safe after work is complete.



NOTE: OUTAGE AND RESTORATION TIMELINES VARY BY OUTAGE TYPE AND SEVERITY OF LINE DAMAGE.

Western Welcomes Soukup

On Oct. 16, Western Cooperative hired Wilson, Kansas, native **TRISTAN SOUKUP** as a third-year lineman apprentice in Ellsworth. Soukup attended Pratt Community College where he studied Electrical Power Technology and earned his associate degree in applied science.

The past two years, Soukup has worked for an electric cooperative based in Wamego, Kansas, but when an opportunity opened in Ellsworth, he was happy to get back closer to home.

“Western Co-op is close to family and friends,” Soukup said. “This was a great opportunity for me to get closer to home and continue working for another great co-op.”



Tristan Soukup

Giving Thanks This Holiday Season

Continued from page 12A ▶

This transformation forever changed rural life, providing opportunities that were once just dreams. Some may wonder why we keep revisiting our past. The answer is simple — it’s about our core values. It’s about fostering a “can-do” spirit that overcomes challenges and delivers tangible results for our members.

In today’s world, it’s easy to take electricity for granted, as it reliably powers our lives about 99.98% of the time. Electricity is a cornerstone of modern living, offering us warmth, light, convenience, communication, and so much more. Only when it’s absent do we truly realize its significance, given our profound reliance on its constant presence.

We take immense pride in being part of an organization that seeks to make a positive impact in people’s lives because it’s the right thing to do. We empower you, our members, to enhance the quality of your lives. Our journey began when we began serving our first members during the holiday season in 1947, and our fundamental commitment has remained unwavering — we are a service organization, first and foremost.

Furthermore, we are honored to support our friends and neighbors, both economically and through charitable endeavors. But above all, we are thankful for every co-op member who contributes to making Western Cooperative Electric exceptional. It is truly an honor to serve you.

As we approach this Thanksgiving, all of us here at Western want to extend our warmest wishes to you and your families. May you have a joyous and blessed holiday season filled with gratitude and appreciation for the abundance in your lives.

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS AND WARM REGARDS.

Co-op Employees ‘Power the Pantry’ This Holiday Season

As we get closer to the holidays, Western Cooperative Electric is excited about its third annual employee food drive challenge. This event is about helping families in our communities who might be struggling with food insecurity. From Oct. 15 to Nov. 15, employees at the cooperative are collecting non-perishable food to give to local food banks.

Western Cooperative Electric is known for providing electricity, but we also care about improving our neighbors’ lives, which is why the food drive began a few years ago.

This year, Western wants to make the food drive even bigger, challenging each employee to donate 30 items. All items collected will be donated to our local food banks.

Assistant General Manager and Member Services Manager Nolan Numrich said, “Western’s annual food drive shows our commitment to our community. It’s not just about electricity; it’s about serving the needs of our members.”

This event is inspired by the Seventh Cooperative Principle, Concern for Community. All cooperatives, including Western Cooperative Electric, believe in Seven Cooperative Principles to guide their decision-making. These principles are a key reason that America’s electric

Local Food Banks:

▶ **ELLSWORTH FOOD BANK,**
907 EVANS ST.

Contact: **KAREN RENARD, 785-531-0873**

▶ **GREAT BEND FOOD BANK,**
3007 10TH ST.

Contact: **620-792-4001**

▶ **PLAINVILLE FOOD BANK,**
206 N. WASHINGTON

Contact: **JANET SWAFFORD, 785-303-0296**

▶ **WAKEENEY FOOD BANK,**
332 N. SIXTH ST.

Contact: **LAURA ANDERSON, 785-953-1509**

cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of their members first.

Last year, Western collected nearly 850 items for local food banks — providing hundreds of meals for families in need. We hope to do even better this year!

Western Cooperative Electric wants everyone to join in and help out — together, we can make a massive difference in the lives of our neighbors. We encourage members to contact your local food bank and donate time, money or food items. Together, we can strengthen our community and help those in need during the holidays.

Donating Tip: Contact your local food bank for a list of items needed to make the most impact with your donation.

Western Shares Success With Dream, Inc.

\$5,000 donation will help complete Dream Camp projects

Western Cooperative Electric, a committed partner in community development, is thrilled to award a Sharing Success grant to **DREAM, INC.**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing transformative summer camps for children whose families are affected by addiction. Western's \$5,000 grant will be used to complete a much-needed playground expansion at the Dream Camp facility.

The check presentation ceremony took place on Sept. 14 at the Dream Camps facility. A significant portion of the funds, \$3,200, will fund the dirt work needed due to the challenging terrain. An additional \$800 will cover costs for sand, and the remaining \$1,000 fund additional swings to accommodate more children simultaneously.

"This collaboration not only reflects Western Cooperative Electric's commitment to community well-being, but also embodies the spirit of giving and support that makes a profound difference in the lives of children and families," Nolan Numrich, Western Cooperative assistant general manager, said. "Western Cooperative Electric is proud to be part of Dream, Inc.'s journey to create lasting positive change in the lives of these children."

Since its inception in 1988, Dream, Inc. has been on a mission to provide healing and hope to children aged 7-11 who have family members struggling with substance use disorders. It is estimated that in Kansas alone, 140,800 children live in environments where a parent or caregiver faces addiction-related challenges. These children are at a higher risk of developing substance abuse issues themselves, making Dream Camps a crucial intervention method.

The Dream Camps program, founded by Sheryl Butler and Glenda Kramer, both veterans in the substance-abuse-assistance field with a combined 87 years of experience, offers these children a lifeline. Through education about addiction, emotional support, and the cultivation of self-worth, Dream Camps empower participants to break the cycle of addiction within their families.

In 1994, Dream, Inc. rescued an abandoned camp facility on the north shore of Cedar Bluff Reservoir. This facility found a new purpose through Dream, Inc.'s dedication. The journey of transformation began after securing an ongoing lease for as long as Dream, Inc. exists for the property from the State of Kansas.



Sheryl Butler, co-founder of Dream, Inc., accepts the \$5,000 Sharing Success grant from Western Cooperative for playground improvements at Dream Camp.

Dream, Inc. has invested in renovating the main building and girls dormitory, constructed a separate bunkhouse for boys, and built a picnic shelter with a basketball court.

This summer marked Dream Camp's 34th anniversary and the impact of their work on the children has been remarkable. Evaluations show significant progress in childrens' understanding of addiction and improved coping mechanisms. One referring therapist even described the camps as providing "a year of therapy in one week."

For more information about Western Cooperative Electric and its community initiatives, please visit www.westerncoop.com. To learn more about Dream, Inc. and how you can contribute, visit www.dreamhays.com.