



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC, INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nick Zerr
President

Terry Hobbs
Vice President

Richard Schaus
Secretary-Treasurer

Landon Heier
Trustee

Frank Joy
Trustee

Marvin Keller
Trustee

Susan Rohleder
Trustee

Tim Stanton
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

Spreading Holiday Cheer

Western Cooperative Electric to retire \$1.2 million in capital credits



Tom Ruth

As we step into the holiday season, there's a special kind of excitement in the air, and at Western Cooperative Electric, we're thrilled to share some holiday cheer with our

members. We're pleased to announce the retirement of \$1.2 million in capital credits this month. Just in time for Christmas, our members who were connected in 2006, 2007, 2012 and/or 2022 will be receiving a check or bill credit as a symbol of our appreciation and our commitment to the cooperative principles that set us apart.

Much like the season of giving, capital credits are a unique benefit

that cooperatives like Western offer to their members. At the end of each year, operating margins over and above our expenses are allocated back to you, our members. These margins represent your ownership in the cooperative, and each year, the board of trustees carefully reviews our financial position to determine how much we can return to members through capital credits.

Think of it as a little extra something under the tree — though, in this case, it won't need wrapping paper or a bow. These funds come from previous years' margins, and we're thrilled to be in a position to return them to you now. By staying committed to your cooperative, you're helping to keep the lights on for everyone in our community, quite literally spreading warmth and light during these colder months.

Continued on page 12D ►



From our co-op family to yours, wishing you a joyous holiday season and a peaceful new year!

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON DEC. 24, DEC. 25, AND JAN. 1.

Former Ellsworth Athletes Launch Project to Update Medical Bags for Local Sports and Community Safety

In a significant push to enhance safety in local sports, former student-athletes **MAKENNA HAAS** and **MADALYN DOBRINKSI** launched an initiative to upgrade the medical bags for Ellsworth Junior/Senior High School's Athletics program and the community's recreational activities.

"Currently, the existing supplies are unorganized and insufficient, housed in basic book bags," said Haas.

"The new, professionally organized medical bags will include essential items such as athletic tape, pre-wrap, medical gloves, sprays and creams for cuts and stings, gauze pads, ice packs, and essential medications like ibuprofen and Tylenol."

This project began in 2023 during their senior year and is backed by a deep understanding of the community's needs. The project will place three strategically located medical bags at City Hall and the Recreation Center while equipping each of the 18 school athletic teams with their own, fully stocked bags. The initiative will bring a total of 21 new medical bags across the community.

Western Cooperative Electric presented Dobrinski and Haas with a \$5,000 grant from our Sharing Success fund to support the project.

"This effort will ensure that athletes and community members have timely access to first aid, enhancing safety during sports and community activities," said Nolan Numrich, assistant general manager at Western Cooperative Electric. "By providing our athletes and community members with accessible, quality first-aid resources, Makenna and Madalyn are setting a standard of care and safety that resonates with all of us. Western Cooperative fully supports their initiative and the impact it will have on the entire community."

Mrs. Karl Dawn Stover and Mrs. Connie Weber,



Nolan Numrich (left), assistant general manager at Western Cooperative Electric, presents a \$5,000 grant check to (from left) McKenna Haas, Mrs. Connie Weber, senior English teacher/student grant writing coordinator, and Karl Dawn Stover, CTE director/student grant coordinator.

along with Haas and Dobrinski, will stock the bags and manage the initial distribution. The ongoing resupply efforts will be coordinated by Athletic Director Ron Davis, to ensure each sport's specific needs are met.

"This initiative speaks to the strength of our young leaders and their commitment to community well-being," said Stover, who will help lead the team in assembling the bags. "These medical kits will provide peace of mind, knowing that immediate assistance is within reach for both organized sports and community activities. Makenna and Madalyn's dedication will have a lasting impact on safety and preparedness."

The organizers aim to have these medical bags operational by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

"Our community deserves the peace of mind that comes with knowing that up-to-date and accessible first aid supplies are available, not just for our athletes but for all participants in community activities," stated Haas and Dobrinski. "This initiative represents a crucial step in our commitment to the health and safety of our community members."

Youth Leadership Opportunities Await High School Juniors in 2025!

Western Cooperative Electric is thrilled to offer high school juniors an exciting opportunity to develop their leadership skills and broaden their horizons! Students whose parents or guardians are members of the cooperative can apply for an all-expenses-paid leadership trip to either Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado. These trips are part of the cooperative's commitment to investing in the youth of our community, nurturing future leaders, and building connections that last a lifetime.

Four high school juniors will be chosen for this incredible journey. Two will attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., while two others will head to the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. **APPLICATIONS FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN NOW AND MUST BE COMPLETED BY JAN. 10, 2025.**

Upon applying, each contestant will receive an entry packet detailing the next steps. Finalists will be scored on a short essay, an open-book quiz, and a virtual interview scheduled for mid-February. The student with the highest score will have the first choice of their preferred destination.

For many past participants, this experience has been life-changing. "Youth Tour showed me that there's so much more to learn about our government, and being in D.C. gave me a real sense of responsibility as a citizen," said Bryan Garvert, 2024 Youth Tour delegate. "This trip has inspired me to consider other people's perspectives of the world other than just my own."

"The camp was a chance to connect with people from all over the country who share similar interests and values," said Taylor Ayers, 2024 CYLC attendee. "The leadership lessons and values I obtained during the trip affected me the most."



This year's winners Bryan Garvert (left) and Mariah Werth pose in front of the U.S. Capitol during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Part of our cooperative's mission is to inspire and empower youth through unique opportunities like these.

"We believe in cultivating leadership and community values among our young members," says Nolan Numrich, assistant general manager. "By sending students to Washington, D.C., and Steamboat Springs, we're investing in a brighter future for both the participants and the community. These trips offer the students a rare chance to explore, network, and grow in ways they may never have expected."

The CYLC in Colorado is known for fostering independence, teamwork and a strong sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, the Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., provides a deeper look into the country's history, government and the role young leaders can play in shaping the future.

Encouraging high school juniors to apply, Numrich emphasizes that the selection process is designed to be challenging yet accessible. "We're looking for students who demonstrate a commitment to learning and who



Taylor Ayers (left) and Evan Walt represented Western during the 2024 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

show potential to be future leaders. We hope that each finalist finds this to be a memorable and valuable experience," he adds.

Applications are open now! High school juniors interested in participating in these enriching leadership journeys must **SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS BY JAN. 10, 2025, AT WWW.WESTERNCOOP.COM/YOUTH-TOUR**. This is a golden opportunity to learn, grow and make a difference. For more information and to start your application, please visit Western Cooperative Electric's website or contact your school counselor. Don't miss your chance to embark on an unforgettable adventure that could shape your future!

SCAN TO
FIND OUT
MORE






Sign up for Operation Round-Up This Holiday Season

This holiday season, join us in spreading goodwill by enrolling in Western Cooperative Electric's Operation Round-Up! As a member, you can choose to round up your bill to the nearest dollar or set a recurring or one-time donation to support the Western Cares fund, a resource for members helping members.

By participating, you'll be making a meaningful difference in our community. To enroll, scan the QR code or call us at 800-456-6720 or email western@westerncoop.com.

TOGETHER, LET'S MAKE THIS SEASON BRIGHTER FOR ALL!

SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE



Spreading Holiday Cheer


Continued from page 12A ▶

In the spirit of Christmas, it's a time to reflect on our values and the ways we can make a difference. At Western, our mission has always been to serve you reliably and affordably, but we're also committed to being a part of the community fabric — because here, you're not just a customer; you're an owner. Capital credits are a reminder that our cooperative exists to serve you, and our success is a shared achievement.

This holiday season, we encourage you to gather with loved ones, enjoy the warmth of your homes, and know you're also connected to something bigger. You're part of a community that values people over profit, and we are so grateful to each of you for your continued trust and support.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season!


**WARM REGARDS,
TOM RUTH, GENERAL MANAGER**

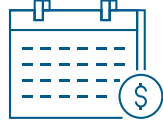



How Capital Credits Work

Electric co-ops are not-for-profit and operate at cost.
Capital credits are a financial benefit of co-op membership.

- 1.** Members pay their electric bills, and we track their business with us each month.


- 2.** The co-op pays operating expenses throughout the year and allocates any leftover operating revenue as capital credits.


- 3.** When financial conditions permit, the co-op board votes to retire (pay) capital credits to the members.


- 4.** We send members their share of capital credits as a bill credit or check.

