



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Keys to Having a Safe and Bountiful Harvest This Season



Tom Ruth

As an electric cooperative, one of Western's primary responsibilities is to provide education and information that promotes the safety and well-being of our community. With the harvest season upon us, it is crucial to remind everyone about the importance of electric safety around power lines. As we all know, harvest season is a busy time for farmers and agricultural workers, and it's easy to overlook potential hazards while focusing on the task at hand. However, taking a few moments to

understand and follow proper safety measures can prevent accidents and save lives.

MAINTAINING A SAFE DISTANCE:

Power lines and electrical equipment are a significant hazard, especially when operating large machinery like combines, tractors and grain trucks. To avoid accidents, it's essential to maintain a minimum distance of 20 feet from power lines in all directions at all times. This includes the height, width and depth of your equipment. Remember, even if you don't come into direct contact with the power line, electricity can arc to your equipment, causing severe injury or even death.

USE A SPOTTER: When operating large machinery near power lines, having a spotter to help guide you can be a

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use. To save energy when using your clothes dryer, add a clean, dry towel to damp clothing before starting the cycle. The towel will absorb excess water, reducing drying time. Remove the towel after 15 minutes. If your dryer lacks an autosense drying feature, reduce the timer to about half a normal cycle. **SOURCE: WWW.HOMESANDGARDENS.COM**



FARM SAFETY NEVER STOPS **ACTION** TAKE

ALL DAY-EVERY DAY | 24-7/365

WWW.WESTERNCOOP.COM

Put safety first with alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps.

- ▶ Always use a spotter when operating hydraulic beds, lifts, arms or extensions.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 20 feet from power lines.
- ▶ Look up when moving equipment such as extending augers or raising beds of grain trucks.
- ▶ Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ▶ Before moving machinery near power lines, contact your electric cooperative to measure power line height. Do not do this yourself. Once you know the height, you can determine appropriate equipment, implement and extension clearances.
- ▶ Do not get out of your truck, tractor or equipment if it makes contact with a power line.

If you are in an accident and power lines are touching the vehicle, remember to:

ASSUME IT'S LIVE: Always assume downed lines are live and dangerous. Do not touch or remove the wires and warn others to stay away.

STAY PUT: Unless there is a secondary emergency such as a fire, it is safer to stay inside the vehicle than to try to exit.

CALL 911: Let the dispatcher know you were in an accident and you have a downed power line on your vehicle. The authorities will contact the cooperative and lineworkers will be sent to disconnect the power.

WARN OTHERS: Witnesses may not notice the downed power line and try to help. Warn them to stay at least 50 feet away.

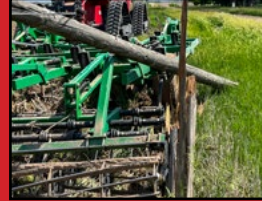


HAY BALES STACKING BALES NEAR POWER LINES CAN CAUSE EQUIPMENT TO ARC AND START FIRE
EST. DAMAGES \$34,995*

***ESTIMATED REPAIR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE DEATH OR INJURIES.**



JOHN DEERE 9360 BROKEN POLE
EST. REPAIRS \$7,995*



CHISEL PLOW TOO CLOSE AND HIT POLE
EST. REPAIRS \$4,995*



JOHN DEERE PLANTER GPS SET TOO CLOSE TO POLE LINE
EST. REPAIRS \$4,995*



BRENT 1080 GRAIN CART AUGER CONTACTED POWER LINES
EST. REPAIRS \$3,995*



1991 JOHN DEERE EXCAVATOR DUG UP UNDERGROUND CONDUCTOR
EST. REPAIRS \$12,995*



2005 CHEVY 2500 HD DISTRACTED DRIVING
EST. REPAIRS \$35,995*



NO-TILL AIR DRILL DAMAGED HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION
EST. REPAIRS \$99,995*



2007 JOHN DEERE 9760 STS COMBINE LEFT AUGER OUT
EST. REPAIRS \$3,995*



2007 MACK TRUCK DISTRACTED DRIVING
EST. REPAIRS \$84,995*



2012 DRY FERTILIZER TRAILER BROKEN POLE
EST. REPAIRS \$729,995*



70' 2017 WESTFIELD AUGER HIT POWER LINES MOVING INTO PLACE
EST. REPAIRS \$16,995*



2018 END DUMP LIFTED INTO POWER LINES
EST. REPAIRS \$9,995*



Report downed power lines or damages immediately 24/7

800-456-6720

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Keys to Having a Safe and Bountiful Harvest This Season

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lifesaver. A spotter can help you maintain the proper distance from power lines and ensure your equipment doesn't contact an energized conductor. It's always better to have an extra set of eyes watching out for potential hazards.

LOOK UP AND USE CARE WHEN MOVING EQUIPMENT: It's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of harvest season, but always remember to look up and be aware of your surroundings when moving equipment near power lines. This includes extending augers or raising the bed of dump trucks and trailers.

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOUR EQUIPMENT CONTACTS A POWER LINE: If your equipment does make contact with a power line, the first thing you should do is call 911 and warn others to stay away. If you can drive away from the power source safely, travel at least 50 feet away before exiting the equipment. If you are unable to drive the machinery, do not exit the cab. The only reason to exit equipment that is in contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. Never touch the ground and the equipment at the same time, jump off equipment with both feet landing on the

ground at the same time. Proceed to "bunny-hop" with both feet tightly together to a safe distance.

EDUCATE YOUR TEAM: Make sure to share this information with your employees and team members. Conduct regular safety meetings to discuss the importance of electric safety around power lines and ensure everyone understands the proper procedures to follow in case of an accident.

Discuss tasks and the potential to come into contact with power lines. Take precautions to ensure no part of the equipment is closer than 20-feet from a power line.

By following these guidelines and sharing this information with your harvest help, we can all work together to ensure a safe and successful harvest season. Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility, and taking a few extra precautions can make a world of difference.

If you have any questions or would like additional resources, please don't hesitate to contact the Western Cooperative office or visit our website at www.westerncoop.com. We are here to support our community and help keep everyone safe.

STAY SAFE AND HAPPY HARVESTING!

WESTERN WELCOMES STANTON TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Tim Stanton

We are pleased to welcome **TIM STANTON** to the Western Cooperative Electric Board of Trustees. Stanton brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to community service, making him an excellent addition to our team.

Stanton was born and raised in WaKeeney and graduated from Trego Community High School in 1983. He went on to earn a certificate in electronics technology. Stanton has been

married to his wife, Melissa, for 35 years, and they reside in rural Ellis County. They have two grown children, Logan and Jessie.

His career began in home and commercial electronics sales and service, where he worked for 12 years. In September 2000, he transitioned to a local family-owned hearing aid business, allowing him to spend more time with family and serving the community.

Stanton's dedication to excellence and his practical approach to problem-solving are evident in his professional and personal life. His previous board experience equips him with a solid understanding of the importance of representing the members while working collaboratively to find solutions that benefit everyone.

He is committed to ensuring Western continues to thrive and serve its members effectively. We are confident that his skills, experience and dedication will make a significant positive impact on our board.

"I feel the cooperative is literally the heartbeat of our communities," Stanton said. "I look forward to helping the co-op carry on with its goals of encouraging growth in its service territories, providing good long-term career opportunities for its employees, all while assuring its history of offering dependable and affordable services to its members.

I am dedicated to working with the current board to do this the best way possible while being realistic about our current everyday challenges."

Please join us in welcoming Tim Stanton to the Western Cooperative Board of Trustees.

Fighting for Just and Reasonable Transmission Rates

When it comes to energy ratemaking, the guiding principle is that those who cause the costs should bear them. This is a straightforward concept, and it's widely accepted as the fairest way to design a just and reasonable rate structure.

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO

I-70 has too much congestion between Missouri and Colorado; the Department of Transportation elects to add four more lanes to the existing interstate highway, a strategic choice due to its location and road-friendly topography. With need established and a path planned, the question arises — which state's taxpayers should pay for the construction cost?

Most would agree costs should be a split between Kansas, Missouri and Colorado taxpayers. In this scenario, however, studies show minimal benefits for the people of Kansas but overwhelming benefits for Denver and Kansas City because of population size and the improved ability to move products between the two cities and states.

In this situation, it seems clear taxpayers from the states reaping the greatest rewards would shoulder the majority of the construction costs. Depending on the study's findings, you might expect cost distribution in line with the benefits, such as a 90-10%, 70-30% or 60-40% split.

This simple illustration is the stark reality Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, Western Cooperative's wholesale generation and transmission provider, grapples with regarding the cost burden for construction of high-voltage transmission infrastructure.

TRANSMISSION CONGESTION MEANS UPGRADES

Kansas is rich in wind and solar natural resources. As investors and developers build renewable energy generation across the state, transmission congestion has triggered the need for upgrades and construction. Similar to the I-70 scenario, more transmission is needed to move electricity to population centers, and while there are some ancillary benefits for our members, large population centers benefit more from the less expensive renewable energy exported out of western Kansas.

WHO SHOULD SHOULDER THE COSTS AND IN WHAT PROPORTION?

For almost a decade, Sunflower has persistently challenged the current cost-allocation methodology at the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) — which coordinates real-time power flow and voltage, minute-by-minute, in its 14-state region — and at the federal level. SPP assigns costs for byway projects — higher than 100 kilovolts (kV) and lower than 300 kV — with the following methodology:

- ▶ 66.6% of the cost is charged to ratepayers in the local zone (e.g., Sunflower's service territory); and

- ▶ 33.3% of the cost is charged to ratepayers in the much larger regional zone.

This methodology works when ratepayers in the local zone gain the most benefit from a transmission project.

However, western Kansas is unique because the imbalance between the cost-causers and the cost-payers for such projects is large and unprecedented within the SPP.

For the past several years, Sunflower has repeatedly demonstrated the unfairness of the cost assignments for four byway projects in its territory.

FAIR COST DISTRIBUTIONS IN SIGHT

On May 31, 2024, Sunflower and its member-owners, including Western, achieved a significant victory in the efforts to get fair pricing for Sunflower's four byway projects. FERC accepted a filing (FERC Docket No. ER24-1583-000) by SPP to charge 100% of the remaining cost of Sunflower's projects to the region and agreed that transmission infrastructure costs need to match the benefits received.

As a result of FERC's recent ruling, the Sunflower region will see a nearly 13% reduction in transmission costs, which totals approximately \$9.9 million annually.

"The decision by FERC [the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] came after a long process that started at SPP in 2018," said Al Tamimi, Sunflower senior vice president and COO of transmission, who led the engagement at SPP to make cost allocation fair and reasonable to Sunflower's members. "We proved that the wind energy being produced in western Kansas, and for which transmission upgrades were mandated by SPP, is primarily benefiting electric consumers outside of our zone."

Although the ruling is an important step for immediate rate relief, Sunflower continues to collaborate with the SPP stakeholder body for approval of a new SPP process for cost-allocation methodology that will enable Sunflower to receive a fair cost allocation for future transmission projects under the SPP tariff.

"Sunflower's mission is to provide wholesale energy services at the lowest possible cost to our members," said Steve Epperson, Sunflower president and CEO. "We will fight for them and those they serve in central and western Kansas regarding fair cost allocations for any future SPP-mandated transmission upgrades."

Several local and national leaders, as well as organizations, supported the change in cost allocation. Comments in support of SPP's filing were submitted by Sunflower, the Kansas Corporation Commission, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, ITC Great Plains, Western Kansas Industrial Electric Consumers, and U.S. Representative Ron Estes. U.S. Senators Roger Marshall and Jerry Moran also submitted a letter requesting FERC accept SPP's filing.

